

Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

Exile on Main Street. The Desert as Internalising Territory

Thesis

How to cite:

Velasco Pérez, Álvaro (2019). Exile on Main Street. The Desert as Internalising Territory. PhD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2019 The Author



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.00010bc3>

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk

Exile on Main St.

The Desert as Internalising Territory



Exile on Main St.
The Desert as Internalising Territory
Álvaro Velasco Pérez

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the Architectural Association School of
Architecture

by Álvaro Velasco Pérez MA
(London)
Architectural Association School of
Architecture
May 2019



Architectural Association
School of Architecture



Contents

Prelude. Genoa, Italy. 1881.	6
 Cluster 1: (the limits of) IDENTITY	
Opening Scene. Paris, 1848	34
Stop 1 <i>The Black Box and the Book of Sekhmet</i> , Egypt, 1849	86
Excursus I Khenti-Amentiu [<i>Foremost of the Westerners</i>] <i>Arabian Knights in Disguise</i> , Mecca, 1888	158
 Cluster 2: (the limits of) VISION	
Stop 2 <i>The Rise of Phaethon</i> . Border Egypt-Libya, 1932	200
Stop 3 <i>The Algerian Sphinx, or 2°20'14.03" East Ghardaïa</i> , 1933	262
Excursus II <i>Eyes that do not see – Desert</i> , Sheba, 1934	326
 Cluster 3: (the limits of) KNOWLEDGE	
Stop 4 <i>Le Domain de l'Afrique</i> Libyan desert somewhere between Benghazi and Cairo, at about 2.45am, 30 December 1935	354
Stop 5 <i>Ex Africa Aliquid Novum</i> Algerian Sahara, 1951	418
Excursus III <i>Fata Morgana</i> , Empty Quarter, 1950	500
 Final Scene <i>The figure emerging from / returning to the desert</i> Paris, 1957	534
 Bibliography	588
List of Figures	600

Prelude. Genoa, Italy. 1881.

A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing.

Heidegger, Martin. *Building, dwelling, thinking.*

Nietzsche never went to the desert. He, however, was keen on it, and planned on travelling to Tunisia in 1881. Staying in Italy at the time, the journey was aborted as his plan of escaping Europe was frustrated – much to Nietzsche's regret – by the country finally being annexed to France in the spring of that year. Nevertheless, even though the desert attracted him, the allure of Friedrich Nietzsche's journey was not so much a fascination with visiting the 'actual locus' of which Zarathustran geographies were the fiction. It was rather a means for securing that in "this way, surely my judgements and eyes will be sharpened towards all that is European."²¹ In other words, Tunis was the margin in which to step across and re-adjust his optics towards the Old Continent; it was the judgement's necessary distance; or a means for gaining criticality. Furthermore, it has been argued, for Nietzsche "the desert is (...) the imaginary place on the edge of the European map from which critique must begin."²² In this, Nietzsche was not that far from other European visitors that have seen in the desert an exterior to what was going on back home. The split between Europe and the desert has a very long tradition. It is an idea as old as the Old Testament and the narrative of the Exodus, permeating through the Gospels with Jesus withdrawing for forty days before starting his public life, emulated by the early Christian hermits, passed on in writing with the *Apophthegmata Patrum* of the Desert Fathers, and eventually reaching the historical frame of this thesis. Understood as an empty lot, a blank page, a void in the chart, or white canvas, the desert is a radical form of otherness vis-à-vis the metropolis. It is a challenge to Hegel's dictum, "Only the modern town can offer the mind the ground where it can achieve awareness of itself."²³ It's its other face: the argument that we can only think of the metropolis from without. Precisely a space in which to contemplate self-awareness; the only means of seeing the heterogeneity of the city holding it as object of inquiry. In that opposition, the desert is a paradigmatic realm in which to research the relationships between the metropolis and its exteriors. Take Nietzsche's project, even in its sketchy outline. There's Europe, the desert, and a vector moving from one side to the other. As he

was tracing his travel itinerary, Nietzsche could prophesy “*Die Wüste wächst. Wehe Dem, der Wüsten birgt!*”⁴ As Heidegger interprets the quote, it was Nietzsche’s nihilism expanding towards Europe⁵. As his desert journey was cancelled, it seems Nietzsche was not a great weatherman and he missed which way the wind blew. It was rather France that was expanding its colonial sands to the south.

What I intend with this research is to question whether the otherness of the desert with regards to the metropolis is a given. Nietzsche took it for granted. As opposed to his understanding of the desert as space for critique as presumed, I would rather argue that the desert has been constructed as such. And, in researching how the desert has been constructed in opposition, new forms of understanding the historical relationships between the metropolis and its exteriors are disclosed. Relations that are not defined by the arrow pointing the vector in one direction – colonialism/imperialism – or to the opposite – critique – ; but, moreover, these relations trace a denser net of limits between the metropolis and the outside, as well as subtler forms of imports and exports.

My own fascination with the desert started in a way not that far from Nietzsche’s. I was studying for a Masters at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London, when I came across Reyner Banham’s *Scenes in America Deserta* (1982). Leaving aside obvious differences with Nietzsche’s project – the book is definitely not of a German travelling in North Africa – Banham’s travelogue has something of ‘otherness’ in finding an architectural historian in the desert – awkward enough – furthermore being him an East Anglian in a Stetson hat, brown leather boots and jeans with turquoise-studded belt, cowboy shirt bejewelled with shoestring tie, crossing through crusty surface of a soda lake riding a foldable bike (Fig. 1). By all means an enduring icon of how odd the desert can get. Nevertheless, the research for my MA dissertation was pretty standard in terms of architecture’s engagement with the desert⁶. It was the canonical 9



Fig. 1- Street-Porter, Tim. *Reyner Banham, riding his Bickerton over
Silurian Lake, California*. 1981; from *Pedro Ignacio Alonso & Thomas
Weaver in conversation with Tim Street-Porter in AA Files* vol. 62.
2011. pp. 28-33.

view of a desert of pioneering expansion of Modernity, of American iconology, Land-art, Banham, John C. van Dyke⁷ and Jean Baudrillard⁸. It was still the desert as a given other to the metropolis. Somehow, I was captivated by Banham's opening dialogue:

« "What is your utilization of the desert, Professor Banham?"

"Huh?"

"The Bureau of Land Management is studying desert utilization; what is it you actually do in the desert?"

"Oh! Well...er...stop the car and look at the scenery!"

"Hm? I don't think we have a category for that."»⁹

While still charmed by its uselessness, I started looking at the actual utilisation of the desert – not through my using it, but other people's uses. So, it was not a matter of travelling to the desert myself, but rather perambulating through the journeys of other travellers. I came to find – certainly quite strange but – fascinating stories. These findings, actually, also came from Banham. However, not exactly the one of the book, but a televised one. I was digging in the archives of the British Film Institute when I came across *Roads to El Dorado: A journey with Reyner Banham* (1979)¹⁰ (Fig. 2), a little-known documentary that records Banham in the American desert. I also had a feeling of treasure-finding, even if it was not from sunny solitary sceneries but from the depths of a forsaken VHS cassette – the desert is always rewarding, even if it's in an analog visit. A prequel to the book, the film traces a weekend trip in the Mojave desert in which Banham – as many Angelenos – leaves his beloved Los Angeles on a rainy Friday afternoon to make his way to Las Vegas – "that Modern El Dorado, Sin City of the 20th century."¹¹ Many of the strategies that Banham used in his previous documentary, *Banham Loves Los Angeles* (1972), are there – his characteristic British voice over the shots, his informal engagement in chit-chatting with the locals, and the history of architecture unfolding in front of the steering-wheel. As the 60s were left behind in the rear-view mirror, Banham moves from Los Angeles into the 70s metropolis of Las Vegas. However, something



Fig. 2- Banham, Reyner. *Roads to El Dorado-A journey with Reyner Banham*. 1979. ©BFI Archives

new comes in this second documentary. It is not the extremities of the itinerary, but rather, the space in between. What Banham reveals is a desert that is not anymore a space on the way to somewhere else, but rather a place from which you return. The title is already telling. As a historian, tracing the roads through the Mojave was in itself worth the visit. “Here, squeezed together, are Indian and Mormon trails, the old Spanish trails, the railroad, the earliest motor roads surveyed by the Automobile Club in the 1910s, and their modern successor, the interstate. All within site of one another, sometimes on top on one another.”¹² As a viewer, I stuck to the roads, more than to any golden El Dorado, Las Vegas or any other conventional definition of ‘mythical city’. Now, the illuminating aspect came when a friend of mine, after having watched the documentary together, challenged me to distract my attention from the American desert – already quite saturated culturally – and turn towards a different desert, the North African one. It was a matter, then, of not seeing Banham’s roads as site-specific, but rather seeing them tracing their way beyond their physical traces, far in distance and in time. Somehow, I started seeing that Banham’s roads to El Dorado were not set up by pioneers and civil engineers only. They were also a matter of European Romantics and Exoticists in North Africa, that had made the desert the locus I was interested in. Looking at their journeys, there was an element of tracking paths through the desert leading to forgotten architecture. A quest that Jorge Luis Borges rendered in the opening lines of the collection of tales *El Aleph* (1949):

“As I recall, my travails began in a garden in hundred-gated Thebes, in the time of the emperor Diocletian.(...) All that night I did not sleep, for there was a combat in my heart. I rose at last a little before dawn. My slaves were sleeping; the moon was the color of the infinite sand. A bloody rider was approaching from the east, weak with exhaustion. A few steps from me, he dismounted and in a faint, insatiable voice asked me, in Latin, the name of the river whose waters laved the city’s walls. I told him it was the Egypt, fed by the rains. “It is another river that I seek,” he replied morosely, “the

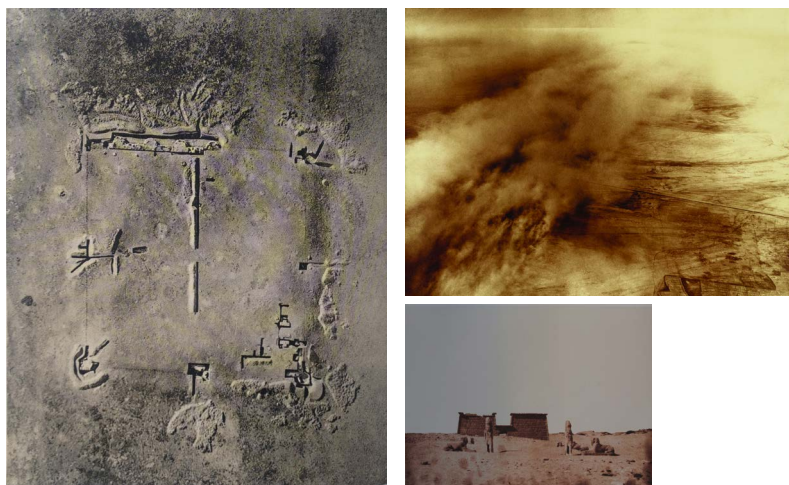


Fig. 3- Poidebard, Antoine. *Due verticale* de castellum de Tell Barak. 1927.
In Poidebard, Antoine. *Une Aventure Archéologique...*

Fig. 4- Poidebard, Antoine. *Tempête de sable dans la steppe syrienne*. c.1935,
in Poidebard, Antoine. *Une Aventure Archéologique...*p. 280.

Fig. 5- Teynard, Félix. *Sébouah* in *Egypt et Nubia*, vol. 2. Archives BnF.
Res Pho U-203(A)-FOL) ©BnF.

secret river that purifies men of death.” Dark blood was welling from his breast. (...) He told me, that if one traveled westward, to the end of the world, one would come to the river whose waters give immortality. He added that on the far shore of that river lay the City of the Immortals, a city rich in bulwarks and amphitheatres and temples. He died before dawn, but I resolved to go in quest of that city and its river.”¹³

In my succession from one traveller to the other, there was a re-enactment of Borges’ bloody rider; a taking of the baton from the preceding, tracing new roads to the City of the Immortals. So far, I didn’t engage in race as such, but just traced their paths through the desert. It wasn’t long after I started collecting stories of the Sahara that I realised that El Dorado was not only a legend of Spanish conquistadores in the new continent. Their cities were buried under the sand (Fig. 3), lost in sandstorms (Fig. 4), isolated in ruinous states (Fig. 5), or just simply elusive mirages (Fig. 6). The myth of the-city-in-the-desert has been a constant for travellers from the Old Continent in the deserts of an even older one. There was always the possibility of finding an elusive city in the empty landscape.

Banham’s documentary has a ‘post-’ flavour to it. First of all, in its bringing the figure of the desert-traveller to an end. His pioneer outfit and the shots of the Mojave at dusk have something Romantic about them. A Romanticism of a lost tradition in Modernity. The giant neon signs of Las Vegas lighting up the darkening sky just wound up the metaphor. But in those lights Banham is ‘post-’ in a second sense. His tracing the journey was also a polemic for establishing who was the first to discover Las Vegas in an architectural sense. “I discovered this desert driving to Las Vegas for the first time in 1968; and I should be forever grateful to Las Vegas for that one thing if nothing else. The gold of my El Dorado is the visual treasure of the Mojave Desert.”¹⁴ Surely the fact that Venturi and Scott Brown published their *A Significance For A&P Parking Lots or Learning from Las Vegas* in March 1968 is indicative for the quarrel. Whether or not Banham was architecturally a pioneer in Las Vegas, he was definitely the first 15

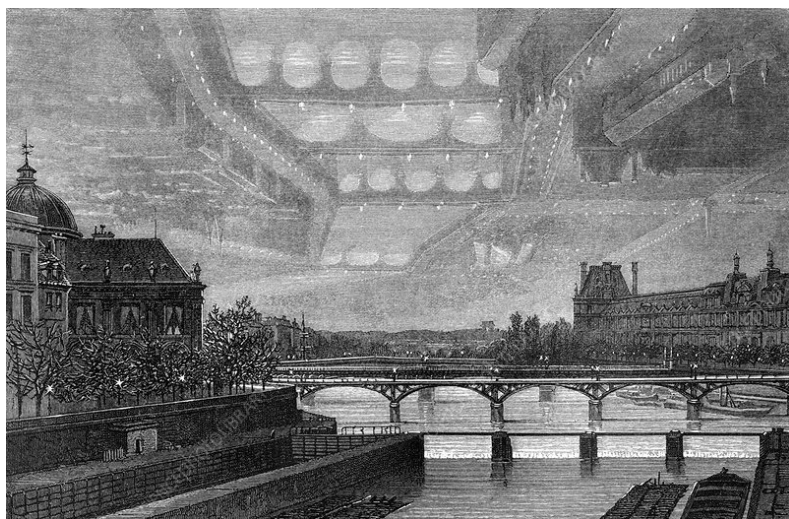


Fig. 6a- *Le Mirage en Afrique* & fig. 6b. *Mirage Supérieur Observé à Paris en 1869*; in Flammarion, Camille. *L'atmosphère, météorologie populaire*. 1888. Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie. p. 267 and p. 277.

architectural historian entering the city in an off-road Jeep over the background soundtrack of Donna Summer's *I feel love* (1977) – the most 'post-' you can get (Fig. 7). The proto-electronic accompaniment is just what was needed to thread the complex state of the desert between primitivism and high-tech, anchorites and pleasure-seekers, petroglyphs and neon signs.

Of course, Banham was not particularly fond of Postmodernism in any sense. However, his *El Dorado* documentary actually opens a reading of the desert as 'in-between' – in-between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, in-between Modernism and Post-Modernism. It is in that sense that the desert becomes a locus of contemporary concern. Not so much in a Nietzschean sense of absolute exterior, but rather as an element that articulates the relationships between metropolis and its exteriors. A place in which the contemporary fascination with margins, exclusions and 'the other' can be tested and addressed in a radical form. Moving away from Banham's *America Deserta*, the North African deserts started to show me a propitious encounter between distant past and distant futures. As I was coming to find these stories in the Sahara, the research started to grow a sense of the traditional tropes of emptiness, elementariness, and primitivism being profoundly mixed with high-technologies like the photographic camera, the airplane or filming (Fig. 8). As I was looking at travellers who were escaping from a Modern Europe in a journey to a distant Africa, there was a sense in which their moving away from the metropolis was constructing a peculiar form in which the metropolis was relating to its exteriors, an encounter in which the technologies of vision were highly influential. The desert these travellers were visiting composed a median space, a space in which it was not clear whether they were leaving the metropolis behind or finding it in their prospects. A standpoint that seemed in consonance with certain contemporary conditions. As post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha locates contemporary 'post-' culture, we find ourselves in the *beyond*, "a moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside,

17



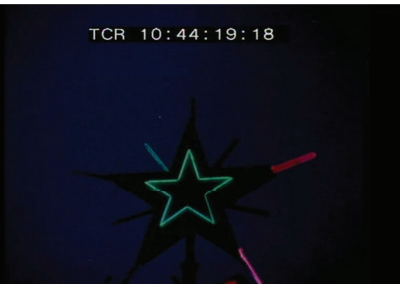
4:14:12



TCR 10:44:17:10



TCR 10:44:19:18



4:22:24



TCR 10:44:24:04



TCR 10:44:25:16



4:39:01



TCR 10:44:44:03



TCR 10:44:47:08



5:06:09



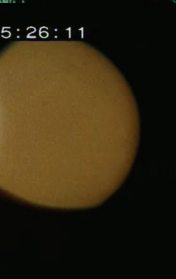
TCR 10:45:14:04



TCR 10:45:21:14



5:26:11



TCR 10:45:28:23



TCR 10:45:31:10





Fig. 8- Mountain, Joseph Dunlap. Series of photos from
California-Arabian Standard Oil Co. Saudi Arabia expedition, 1934-1935. ©Smithsonian Collection



(previous page)
Fig. 7- Banham,
Reyner. Sequence
from *Roads to
El Dorado-A
journey with
Reyner Banham*.
1979. ©BFI
Archives

inclusion and exclusion.”¹⁵ While the ‘post-’ sets its foot towards the future, its garments are still trapped in the past. It is the ‘beyond’ a moment in which it is not clear whether the past is being overcome or its perpetuation starts to unfold. A halting condition in which to carefully focus on the ‘beyond’ as outer edge in which we stand. Some of the key relations at stake for contemporary postcolonial practices – self/the other, identity/difference, centre/periphery – were already present in the travelling projects of the characters I was coming across. It was their journeys that were putting the dichotomies into questions. By stepping-out into their itineraries, it was not clear what was here and what was there. It was not anymore the interior and exterior of Europe, so clearly defined in Nietzsche’s ideal sojourn. Rather, their journeys highlight a matter of moving the boundary, of putting into question the slash or virgule between them – the edge of ‘post-’ culture.

Somehow my thesis intended to generate that sense of bracketed space. For that purpose, I organised the material as one single journey. Opening in the Paris of the 1848 Revolution, it was to trace an itinerary following the characters I was researching on, from Paris to Egypt, moving from there geographically westwards in North Africa, chronologically clockwise into Sudan, Libya, Algeria... for roughly a hundred years until their return to Paris. A logic of departure-tour-and-return that operates both in the macro-scale of the entire thesis, but also in the micro-scale of each character. The intention of the circularity of the structure is two-fold. First, it aims

at providing the reader with a sense of orientation – essential in any journey in the desert. As opposed to Nietzsche’s southward vector and Banham’s west-to-east itinerary, the circularity of my journey intends the establishment of a centre for the two coordinates. At this centre, rather than the metropolis, one finds the desert. Departing from the 1848 revolution in Paris, the journey questions the preponderance given to Revolution in modern architectural historiography. Beginning in the 1848 revolution plays a pun. It is arguably the least heroic of the Parisian revolutions – the most bureaucratic, the most bourgeois. However, in this sense, it is also the one in the inception of Paris as a modern metropolis. Putting into question the focus of architectural historiography in the metropolis, the circular movement intends displacing its centre to the desert, around which the entire narrative orbits. Second, although it argues the desert as ‘a place you return from’ – rather than a space on the way to somewhere else – the circular structure provides the reader with the desert tradition of being *en route*. That is, you don’t go there to find something – there’s always a void in the centre of the desert – rather the narrative is about the artefacts you pick along the way. These are the elements that I have researched about, and the ones that the thesis discusses. As opposed to their intention to find meaning in the ‘beyond’, my putting the desert at the centre doesn’t mean that the meaning lies in the middle, but rather the thesis proposes finding it ‘along the way’.

Each chapter deals with one particular character travelling at one particular moment in time. The chapters are of two kinds: *stops* – taking place in North Africa proper – and *excursus* – that intend to reflect on previous stops, taking a detour to the deserts of Arabia. These are organised in three clusters, each of which is composed of two *stops* and an *excursus*. The centre of the cluster is in the second *stop*. There, there’s always an architectural finding. From Gustave Flaubert’s ‘everything in Egypt seems made for architecture’ in the first cluster, to Le Corbusier’s visionary flights in the M’Zab – cluster 2 – and Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan’s ethnography as a way of seeing architecture – cluster 3 – the central stop of each

cluster questions one architectural revelation. The first stop of the cluster provides a context under which to frame that question. This context describes a contemporary concern under which to revisit the architectural findings. The first cluster deals with problems of *identity* in mid-nineteenth century metropolis. The second cluster looks at the change of *vision* brought by aerial view with the technology of the airplane. And the third one with the *knowledge* of the Other. What the thesis argues is that bringing them to the desert implies a radical way of dealing with these concerns. The journey into the desert implied bringing them to their limits. *Identity* is looked at through Maxime du Camp's project of destruction of his own home – in *La Maison Démolie* – as a way of coping with the loss of homeliness in the Paris of 1848. *Vision* is contextualised by the efforts of the cartographers of the Royal Geographical Society of London for mapping the border between Egypt and Libya. And *knowledge* is framed within the context of ethnography as a shift of epistemological paradigm on dealing with the Other. Placing these concerns in the desert brought a tension between holding control and letting it loose beyond its limits. A tension that is reflected upon through the *excursus*. The first one deals with *disguise* in Romantic travellers like William Gifford Palgrave, Richard Burton and Pierre Loti. The second looks at *blindness*, in the journey of André Malraux to the capital of the Queen of Sheba, and his predecessor, Joseph Arnaud. And the third reflects on *ignorance*, in authors that have dealt with the phenomenon of Fata Morgana. Each excursus proposes the desert as a locus in which these concerns are treated otherwise to the way they were dealt with in the metropolis. The discovery in the desert always precluded a dealing with their reversal.

This space-time frame that I was choosing as object of research and writing constraint was intendedly colonial. The deserts I deal with in this thesis are set up in an Afro-European highly colonial context. However, also intentionally was the selection of the characters. In the margin-condition of the desert that I was interested in, the protagonists that compose the journey are marginal as regards

colonialism. That is, their journeys are clearly enabled by the colonial infrastructure; however, they were never fully aligned with any colonial project, at least in a conscious way. They are not the kind of colonial stereotypes¹⁶ in some post-colonial studies – the Orientalist connoisseur (Edward Said), the coloniser and colonised (Bhabha), or the subaltern (Frantz Fanon / Gayatri Spivak). Rather, as regards Colonialism, they form a set of *minor* characters. The selection of characters explores the paradox of these figures – Gustave Flaubert, Le Corbusier, André Malraux, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Raymond Roussel, Michel Leiris, Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan; eminent figures that hardly could be considered ‘minor’ within their fields – being read as minor. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari consider, minor is not a condition in itself, but rather one is minor in relation to something¹⁷. In this case, the minor condition of my characters is in relation to two aspects. On the one hand, in relation to Colonialism. As explained above, they move within the structures of colonialism, however, their intentions do not align with it in their time. This is more clearly the case in Michel Leiris (Stop 4). He travelled to Africa with Marcel Griaule’s famous ethnographic expedition. However, being within it, his form of dealing with the colonial subject soon started diverting, opening up to new forms of looking at other cultures. The



Fig. 9- Lane, Edward William. Notebooks from *Camera lucida* cards loose inside a hard binding. *Women and jewellery*. c.1825-28. ©The Griffith Institute, University of Oxford

selection of characters intends exploring this possibility, having in mind the urgency Edward Said placed on the quest: “Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and people from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative perspective.”¹⁸ While I don’t claim having found such forms, the research has pointed to me some risks in the contemporary search of them. In a second sense, minor refers not to the characters but to the desert. The desert is a minor territory within the field of history of architecture. It has been an object that has never given much fruit. This, I will argue, is not due to its barrenness, but rather to lack of attention. On the contrary, the thesis argues for the abundance of interest in researching about it, and claims its minor position as something that needs to be rethought.

The way I have chosen to look at these journeys is through minor forms of writing – their diaries, biographical memoirs, sketches taken on site, articles in journals, pieces of news, rushed impressions, index cards... (Fig. 9) Their journeys never made History; they do not compose landmarks unfolding time. Precisely, they are poles apart from Revolution. And their selection was an attempt to question the possibility of understanding a set of relationships between the



metropolis and its exteriors in which the logic is not about Modernity moving forward with Revolution taking place within the metropolis, and Colonialism taking place in its exteriors. It argues Modernity unfolding in a different mechanism which I call *internalisation*.

With internalisation I point to the historical process through which the modern city appropriates or absorbs within it what excluded or defined as its outside. I look at this process particularly in the case of the modern metropolis. In this case, three main steps describe the mechanism of internalisation. First, there's a definition of the self over a background of the other. The modern metropolis is not that much defined by its own extremely heterogeneous identity. In a more legible way, the metropolis is defined by *via negativa*, by setting out what the metropolis is not. At different times, different exteriors form the background against which the city is defined. The modern metropolis is not exotic, primordial, irrational, foreign, etc. At this point, it's not important to specify how each category corresponds to a historical moment; I simply argue that the modern metropolis is defined by exclusions. This is the 'Africa as exterior of Europe' in Nietzsche's project.

In a second step, the 'exterior' – which was a generic category; that what the metropolis-is-not – starts to be defined as something specific. It is not, then, an ever-expanding backdrop; but rather a defined exterior – a bounded area within the background. It is the moment highlighted by the travellers setting out from the metropolis. Their fascination is with something specific – here is when the categories of the exotic, the irrational, the primitive, etc. have a more defined cultural boundary. A fascination that is a reaction to the situation back home. The trouble with these 'findings', these exteriors, is precisely in that; they are highly entangled with the condition they were fleeing from – even if it is in a reverse way. In this sense, it is not a matter of understanding what it is exactly that they saw, as it was influenced with their projections of the questions back home. As Edward Said argues in *Orientalism*, the construction of the category of

‘Oriental’ is not that much a matter of ‘them’, but rather it has to do with ‘us’, Westerners¹⁹. And he sees it unfolding in the impressions of European travellers. “What gives the immense number of encounters some unity, however, is the vacillation (...) Something patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar. One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known; a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing. (...) The Orient at large, therefore, vacillates between the West’s contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in – or fear of – novelty.”²⁰ At this point of the process, it is important to look deeper into what composes that “see[ing] new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing.” In this sense, my research has prioritised two elements. On the one hand the technologies of vision that enabled that ‘way of seeing’. On the other, the artefacts they were bringing from their journeys – photographs, maps, drawings, sketches, miniatures, figurines... – that both embed their way of seeing and become the very material which is discussed back home.

In the final step – the internalisation proper – that category is imported back into the metropolis. While originally intended as exteriors, spaces of critique vis-à-vis the metropolis, the categories paradoxically make their way back into the metropolis. In this movement I have traced their final destinations as interiors in the metropolis; into spaces that collect, contain and, overall, put a boundary around their experiences. In this paradoxical movement, the process of internalisation is a peculiar mechanism with which the metropolis moves forward: capturing exteriors, appropriating or absorbing within, bringing inside what was originally excluded.

In this process, the desert played a key role. Moving beyond Nietzsche’s understanding of it as exterior, what my research highlights is how the desert has been a propitious territory for this process. This is due to two characteristics of the desert. First, because of it being a *limit* – not an exterior. The journey is organised around three clusters, 27

each of which deals with one specific category that was crucial for Colonialism, and that has been highlighted by post-colonial critique. These are *identity*, *vision* and *knowledge*. For these categories, I would argue, the desert supposed bringing the colonial enterprise to its limits. The desert supposed a locus in which colonialism was not unfolding as power struggle; quite the opposite, it was precisely this 'being-out-of-control' that became a different form of colonial appropriation. Second, because of how *accommodating* the desert is. Seemingly an empty, meek surface in which to project, it has been utilised as the element that enabled the internalisation of different 'exteriors'. The desert accommodates, at the same time as being inhospitable. It is a fascinating space which is so alien, but at the same time a place to be at home²¹. A territory that absorbs 'median categories' – as Said sees them – not completely familiar, not completely alien. In that sense, the desert remits to Bhabha's Third Space of enunciation. Neither interior nor exterior, for Bhabha the Third Space of enunciation is "the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference", a crucial area for post-colonial studies as it is where that negotiation between cultures takes place. There he sees the potential to overcome colonial cultural appropriations into a hybrid encounter. As Bhabha sees it, "(f)or a willingness to descend into that alien territory (...) may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti- nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves."²² Whilst it is still a possible fruitful terrain for contemporary cultural encounters, and a crucial quest that should continue, revisiting the stories of these minor characters in the desert pose the risk of the Third Space of enunciation becoming a space for

internalisation rather than Bhabha's *internationalisation*.

Finally, a question should be posed to my own research. I have only focused on European travellers – particularly French and British. As the writing of the pages of this thesis has unfolded, there was a voice clearly missing: the voice of the various North Africans the travellers encounter. I haven't been able to introduce it. That was precisely where my own identity could have been my downfall. Spanish – precisely from a point in which Europe becomes a desert in its closest strait with Africa – architectural historian working in London; my own fascination with the desert could have driven me to give voice to “the other”. The temptation was already present in the travellers we are to look at; they were fascinated with the desert and its inhabitants; however, in that fascination was the trigger that precipitated internalisation. While I hope at some point I will have become familiar enough with North Africa to be capable of voicing its problems and hopes, I also hope that the journey through this desert of the thesis is worth reading for its own sake.

Endnotes

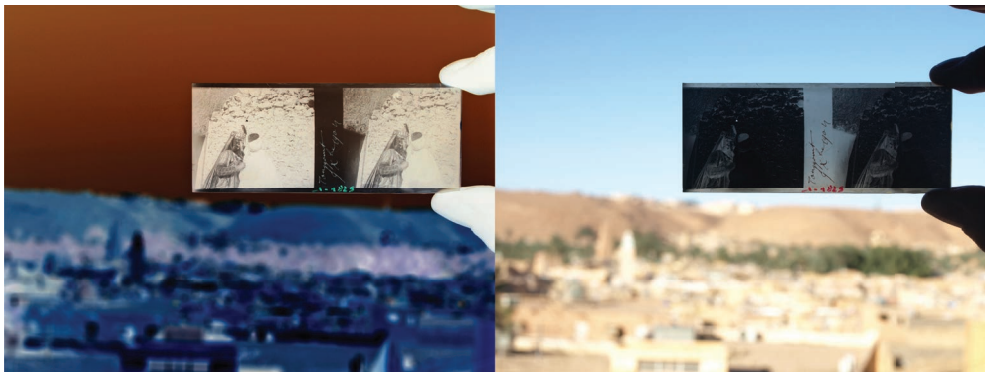
1. Friedrich Nietzsche, Letter to Köselitz, 13 March 1881 in G. Colli and M. Montinari (eds.), *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*. 1975. Berlin, De Gruyter. Vol. III: 1, p. S.68.
2. Günzel, Stephan. *Nietzsche's Geophilosophy* in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*.
3. As quoted by Albert Camus in his essay *Helen's Exile* in Camus, Albert, *Selected Essays and Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Philip Thody. 1970. Harmondsworth, Penguin. p. 137.
4. As Zarathustra claims in Nietzsche, Friedrich W. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, a book for everyone and no one*. 2003. Harmondsworth, Penguin. p. 248. written some two years after the planning of the trip, between 1883 and 1885.
5. cf. Heidegger, Martin. *Was Heisst Denken?* [What is Called Thinking?]. 1954. Tübingen, Niemeyer. pp. 11-on.

6. Titled *Read on the American Desert*, the dissertation can be found in https://issuu.com/aaschool/docs/alvaro_velasco-read-on-th-american-
7. Van Dyke, John Charles. *The Desert. Further Studies in Natural Appearances*. 1901. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons.
8. Baudrillard, Jean. *Amerique*. 1986. Paris. B. Grasset.
9. Banham, Reyner. *Scenes in America Deserta*. 1982. London, Thames & Hudson. p. 3.
10. Banham, Reyner. *Roads to El Dorado-A journey with Reyner Banham*. 1979. Documentary for the BBC *The World About Us*. Producer Julian Cooper, Series editor Anthony Isaacs and Michael Andrews. BFI archives, Prog. No. LGFB570T. TX: 03/06/79.
11. Ibid. Time: 01:21:00.
12. Ibid. Time: 02:47:00.
13. Borges, Jorge Luis. *The Immortal in The Aleph*. Trans. with an introduction by Andrew Hurley. 2004. New York, Penguin Books. p. 20.
14. Ibid. Time: 48:36:00.
15. Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. 1994. London, Routledge. p. 1.
16. I borrow the term from Homi Bhabha, that defines them as such in *ibid.*, p. 67.
17. cf. Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix. *What is Minor Literature?* in *Kafka. Toward a minor literature*. Trans. by Dana Polan. 1986. London, University of Minnesota Press. pp. 16-27. Of the three characteristics they assigned to minor literature, I mainly focus on the first one – “a minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language.” (p. 16) Of the other two, being ‘political’ and its ‘collective value’ (p.17), because the authors see it as a possibility of a ‘different form of politics’ while in the case of my characters it consists of a perpetuation of colonialism, through internalization. I focus mainly in this first as it emphasizes its “deterritorialization” (p.16), with its sense of departing from the centre, Deleuze and Guattari defining the role of the minor writer as “finding(...) his own desert.” (p. 18) – an idea to which they return in their conclusion (p.26).
18. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 1987. London, Penguin Books Ltd. p. 24.
19. Said affirms that “[m]y real argument is that Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political- intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with “our” world.” In Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 1987. London, Penguin Books Ltd. p. 12.
20. Ibid., p. 58. .
21. Aldo van Eyck, driving through the Sahara with his wife, wrote to Carola Giedion-Welcker: “We had an amazing time penetrating the Sahara(...) The Tademaït plateau;

the Tidikelt, the Tafedest; we've never really felt so at home anywhere." Aldo van Eyck to Carola Giedion-Welcker, probably June 1951, as quoted in Jaschke, Karin. Jaschke, Karin. *Mythical Journeys: Ethnography, Archaeology, and the Attraction of Tribal Cultures in the Work of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan*. PhD Dissertation. 2012. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University. p. 179.

22. Bhabha, Homi. 1994. p. 38-39.

Cluster 1
(the limits of)
IDENTITY



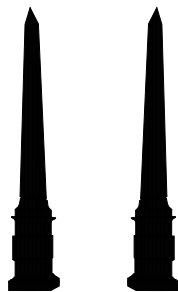
Alexandria was the gate to the Egyptian desert in the mid-XIX century. The two Cleopatra's Needles – one is now in London, the other in New York – used to welcome the seafarers. Beyond them laid the desert and the Nile. This cluster enters the desert through a different obelisk, what was known as the third Cleopatra's Needle, having already been secured in Paris, France.

As a preparation for the journey, the 'Opening Scene' of this cluster will look at the dichotomy metropolis / desert. The desert has been traditionally conceived as the other to the metropolis; a conceptual split 'metropolis / desert'. This cluster deals with the alternative of thinking the dichotomy otherwise. It will not be a matter of 'metropolis = us / desert = the other'. Rather, it proposes displacing the equation one term to the left= 'metropolis = us; / = desert.' The desert is the oblique stroke, the element that mediates encounters between the metropolis and its exteriors. The unknown factor [incognita] is, of course, the other – "the other = ?". But resolving the question, in the mid-XIX century was also a matter of giving response to an increasing questioning of the self. A crisis accentuated in the Parisian Revolution of 1848.

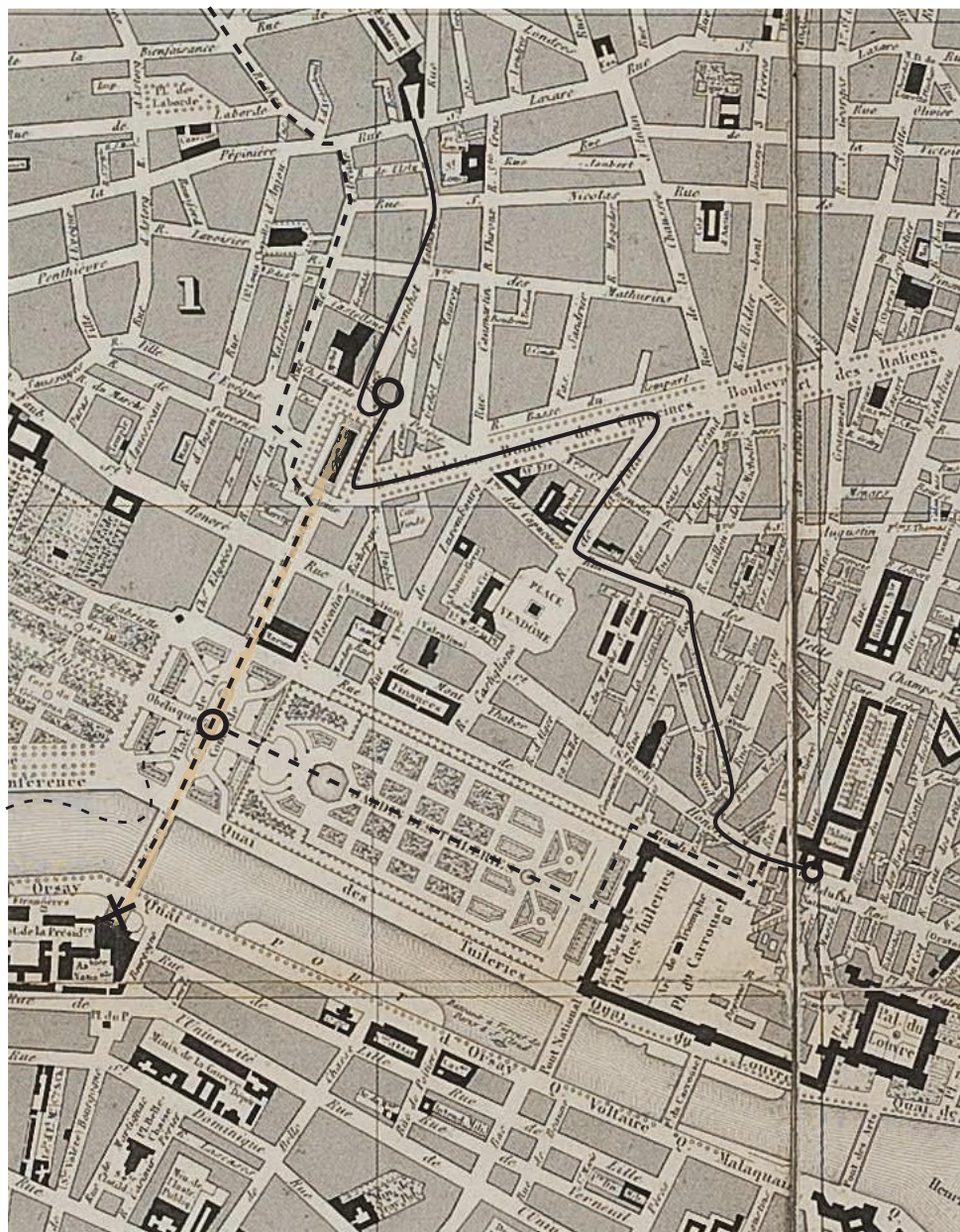
The journey departs from Paris, February 1848, where the Revolution was giving an answer to the equation. Witnessing the riots "from an artist's perspective", Maxime du Camp and Gustave Flaubert proposed a different one. The revolt caught them in the middle of the preparation for their journey to Egypt. Stocktaking material for the journey, the 'Opening Scene' gives way to the possibility of looking at their Egyptian sojourn as a way of dealing with the loss of identity in the modern metropolis.

Taking us to the desert, Stop 1 will look at the way Du Camp and Flaubert depicted the other. The chapter is framed by the photographic camera that constructed their visions of Egypt. It will both look at what was left out of the black box, and zoom-in to what was at focus – the Nubian Man, figure that presides most of Du Camp's shots.

From Du Camp's depiction of the other, Excursus 1 will flip the camera looking at the depiction of the self. Focusing on the mania of self-portrait on Oriental costumes, the excursus will meditate on the implications of the traveller acquiring the identity of the other back in the metropolis. It will propose a possible solution of the equation as "the other = inside the metropolis."



Opening Scene. Paris. 1848.



“(...) all of a sudden, there was a crackling noise behind them like the sound of a huge piece of silk being ripped in two. It was the fusillade on the Boulevard des Capuciens. ‘Ah! They were killing off a few bourgeois,’ said Frédéric calmly.

For there are situations in which the kindest of men is so detached from his fellows that he would watch the whole human race perish without batting an eyelid.”

Gustave Flaubert, *L'Education Sentimentale*, 1869, p. 283.

Revolution gives always a flashing opening. In Gustave Flaubert's text, its 'sudden', 'crackling noise' is muffled by indifference. Flaubert moving through the city of Paris of the 1848 Revolution is the figure of the disengaged flâneur. Detached, dispassionate, he navigates the city but keeping his distance. He's in the metropolis but keeping it at bay, not belonging to it. He doesn't bat an eyelid because boredom is the lens through which he sees the epic of revolution turning unheroic. February 1848, in his vision, is architecturally uninteresting. It's understandable. Bearing in mind that the event missed the storming of the Bastille, the agonistic barricades of the *communes*, or the street struggles of May '68, it could generally be considered architecturally modest compared to the other revolutions Paris has hosted. Even Walter Benjamin, who in his *Exposé of 1935* sketched the importance of its barricades for the fall of Louis Philippe¹—one of his few references to this revolution in the vast *Arcade Project*—simply noticed it in passing, moved on and dedicated an entire chapter to the ones of the *communes*—architecturally more fruitful at first glance. Nevertheless, this condemnation of the revolution as irrelevant for architecture is a neglect. Following in the footsteps of Flaubert shows that the spatial condition of the event is worth considering. Simply by looking at each of the architectural elements involved in Flaubert's journey in Paris highlights two main spaces. A conceptual split between two spatial realms was at its core: the space of revolution and the desert voyage. Flaubert is the thread that sews the two together.

Perhaps Flaubert's disdain for the revolt was more a matter of timing than boredom. By the mid-afternoon of February 23rd when Flaubert was entering Saint-Lazare station, he had already missed the trigger, and was only capable of witnessing how the storm was unfolding. Looking back at the events, Flaubert summarised the rush of the revolution's arrival as "the fall of the monarchy had been so swift that, once the first moment of stupefaction had passed, the middle classes felt a sort of astonishment at finding they were still alive."² Flaubert was late and the revolution was perhaps too quick. The revolt had arrived twenty-four hours before Flaubert showed up in Paris. In this, the surge was moving from two spatial conditions; emerging from its *space for discussion of political reform* into its *space of representation*. To understand how Flaubert proposed a journey to the desert as an alternative to the revolution, we first have to understand how revolution was moving from a secluded interior into *plein air*.

The space for discussion of political reform

In the months preceding the event, and following the banning of unauthorised public assembly of more than twenty people, the space for radical political reform was displaced from the streets into the so called 'banquets'. These concentrated the energies hostile to Louis-Philippe's reign. The first of these meetings took place on July 9, 1847, at the Château Rouge, a popular open-air dance hall in the north of Paris, that brought together twelve hundred people pledging allegiance to reform. Gathered around austere meals, they enacted the stage for political harangues disguised as toasts. From the reformist circles of Paris, the banquets spread through the provincial cities. By Christmas Day, Rouen had hosted its own, with an audience of hundreds enthusiastically applauding the tirades. However, one of the listeners wasn't moved. Flaubert was present. His impressions were more in terms of a culinary/literary review, in which both qualities fraudulently fell deficient. "What taste! What cuisine! What wines! And what speeches! (...) Nothing could make me more scornful of

success, considering the price at which it is purchased. I sat unmoved, nauseated by the patriotic fervor they whipped up with mealy platitudes such as ‘the abyss toward which we are running’, the ‘honor of our flag’, the ‘shadow cast by our standards’, the ‘fraternity of peoples.’ Never will there be a quarter as many ovations for the most beautiful works of the masters (...)”. Certainly, the political fervour of the masses was not Flaubert’s cup of tea. His poetry was high in aspiration, and for it his bar was that of the masters, not of the political orators. Nevertheless, though diminishing the importance of the political statements, Flaubert’s critique lays bare how the political agitation of the revolution was cooked in the ambiguous spaces of the banquets – a reformist gathering clothed as *table d’hôte*, or a theatrical performance of purveyors of received ideas. In any case, a camouflaged space on the verges of legality, operating as counter-space to the National Assembly.

With such a precedent, clearly Flaubert would not bother attending the meeting of these two ‘assemblies’ face-to-face. It was on February, 22nd that another banquet – one which would gather thousands at a hall on the Champs-Élysées – was planned to occur in conjunction with a march of workers and students. The government managed to cancel the booking for the banquet. However, the march took place as scheduled. Singing the Marseillaise, thousands congregated at the Place de la Madeleine, moving through the axis of Rue Royale into the Place de la Concorde, towards the Seine where the military police blocked them in front of the classical colonnade of the Assemblée Nationale. There the tumult started, with those trying to cross the bridge violently repulsed by the dragoons; the rest spreading the revolt through the city chanting “*Vive la réforme! à bas Guizot!*” (Foreign Minister and Prime Minister at the time), which moved into “*Vive la réforme! À bas les bourgeois! À bas les aristos!*”, and eventually became the force for Louis-Philippe’s abdication. However, the trigger started with a re-appropriation of the Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly axis as the space of representation for the revolution (Fig.1). This was the more heroic meal that Flaubert was late for.

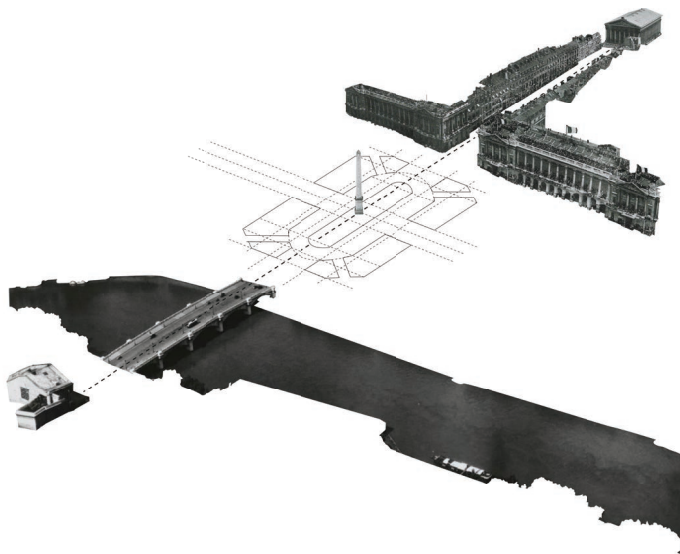


Fig. 1- *Axonometric view of the axis Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly*. Image by the author.

The space of representation for the revolution

In order to understand the meaning of this ‘banquet’ of the 22nd of February, it is important to observe how the table was set and how the courses were slowly cooked in time. The construction of the Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly axis was an elaborate historical recipe, beyond the ready-cooked event that took place that day. In moving from its space of discussion (*banquets*) into its space of representation (*Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly axis*) the revolution was not proposing an abrupt historical change, but rather the re-enactment of past affairs. A rather convoluted history, as it is the space of the axis itself that develops re-volution: seemingly a straight line, it has historically evolved through spiral actions between the future to come and the past that is appropriated – a cyclical movement between state and reform that took shape in the very architectural elements that compose the axis³. Each of the main elements of the axis – the façade of the National Assembly, the Pont and Place de la Concorde, the temple of la Madeleine – were either projected by the State and reappropriated by revolution or vice-versa.

In this labyrinthine shifting condition of projects and counter-projects, the Place de la Concorde synthesised the context in which the 1848 Revolution entered its space of representation. Marching from one edge – Madeleine – to the other – National Assembly –, the crowds gathered at the Place de la Concorde after being prevented from crossing the Seine. There, amid the shouts of ‘*Vive la Réforme!*’ emerged the erect profile of the obelisk with which the centre – after being marked by equestrian figures and the guillotine⁴ – finally had threaded its way through succeeding regimes, and was then properly fixed with a needle. The pointed pillar culminated the construction of the axis, and therefore, a space to be struggled for by the reform. As was depicted in the *Annales de la Révolution Française* 1848, the events of February 22nd brought together the grapple between the march and the soldiers at the centre of the square (Fig.2). The



Fig- 2- Arnout, J. *Vive la Réforme! A bas Guizot!* ©BnF Gallica

peristyle of the National Assembly and the pointed silhouette of the central monument were surrounded by the surging mob that emerged from the confined space of political discussion – banquet – into the space of representation.

The obelisk at Luxor

Although similarly meek towards the previous revolutions, and at first glance not particularly significant for the one unfolding, the obelisk actually played a key role. Given by the vice-king of Egypt Méhémet Ali in 1831⁵, the adopted monument found its difficult way to Paris where it was eventually installed at the centre of the Place de la Concorde in 1836. The instalment of the obelisk at the centre of the square was a definitive tour de force: the culmination of the axis overcoming the struggle of symbolic figuration through abstraction. If the history of the square was continuously shifting by the representation of power through the symbolic form of figurative sculpture, the obelisk radically put a final end (point) to the trajectory, signifying the Madeleine-Place de la Concorde-National Assembly axis with the pointed tip of its golden pyramidion. Paradoxically, though, the obelisk at Place de la Concorde was both an abstracted monolithic axis and a symbolic centre of coordinates for France.

1848 was also the jubilee year of Napoleon's campaign in Egypt (1798-1801). The arrival of the stone in Paris was a product of power struggle – this time abroad rather than at the centre of the metropolis. Vice-king Ali had offered the two twin obelisks that stood at the sides of the entrance of Luxor Temple, but it was Champollion himself who elucidated – by order of king Charles X – which of the two was to be taken to Paris⁶. Famous for having deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphic script through the Rosetta Stone, and having selected that obelisk, he died four years before the erection of the obelisk at the Place de la Concorde. Nevertheless, his elder brother published Champollion's interpretations of the Egyptian inscriptions in the body of the obelisk accompanied by the drawings and manuscripts 43

of the younger. Paradoxically, if Champollion was the decipherer, the *avertissement* to the book proposed a new inscription (this time in French) for a monument “in memory of the French expedition in Egypt, the most memorable of Modern times” – as he proposed the obelisk to be understood. The French script would read:

A L'ARMÉE D'ORIENT
QUI OCCUPA
L'ÉGYPTE ET LA SYRIE
EN 1798, 1799, 1800 et 1801
— — —
LOI DU.....
1834⁷

“[To the Army of the Orient/that occupied/Egypt and Syria/in 1798, 1799, 1800 and 1801/Law of .../1834]” In ruinous state, encrypted in a halo of mystery, it is good to see that Champollion is sincere as regards the obelisk. It was not about Antiquity. It was a matter of activating Modernity – more specifically the geopolitical power of the French Empire. The new “Latinised hieroglyph” was, nonetheless, never to be inscribed on the podium. However, Champollion was already presenting how the modern was to connect with the antique. Months before the official erection at Place de la Concorde, in the midst of the popular attention towards the needle en route, Theophile Gautier prefaced his *Mademoiselle de Maupin* arguing that the obelisk was a reminder of how France needed to borrow from the distant past because its own civilisation was not moving forward⁸. Nevertheless, the eerie presence of the obelisk in la Concorde operated as a signifier of the French capacity for linking Egyptian Ancient History with the Modern *histoire* that was being unfolded by the contemporary French Empire. In that sense, the obelisk was a bridging device, connecting the distant past with the immediate present.

One at Paris, its twin remaining at Luxor, it was very much

the strange and particular condition of doubleness that was discussed when dealing with the two obelisks at the gate of the temple. This was the case in the entry of 'Luxor' in the *Description de l'Égypte*⁹ – the encyclopaedic publication that Napoleon ordered after his invasion.

Lorsque l'on arrive en face du palais de Louqsor, les momens de grandeur colossale que l'on y voit accumulé, frappent à-la-fois d'étonnement et d'admiration: mais on remarque, avant tout, deux obélisques monolithes en granit rouge. [On arriving at the facade of the palace at Luxor, the colossal monuments strike one with astonishment and admiration. However, above all, the two monolithic obelisks in red granite are remarkable.]¹⁰

The entry on *Description des Ruines de Louqsor* (chapter IX, section VII) was carried out by Jean-Baptiste Prosper Jallos and Édouard de Villiers, engineers, two of the 167 scientists and scholars that accompanied Napoleon's army in their occupation of Egypt. Ordered by Napoleon, the offspring of this 'army' was a colossal enterprise that intended to describe their observations. They were gathered in twenty-three tomes: twelve volumes of plates, one with their descriptions, one atlas and nine volumes of text, bringing together aspects of natural history, demography, archaeology, architecture.... basically, the extent of the 'book' was every single French discovery in Egypt. The *Description* was not only colossal in its scope, but the physical presence of the volumes matches the monumental character of its content. The first edition published between 1809 and 1828 came out of the press including some of the volumes in the format of 'Mammutfolio' (1m x 0.81m) – as it was baptised. The plates illustrating the two obelisks (Fig.3) were published in double spread (1.62m x 1m), representing the three faces that contain hieroglyphs. The turning of the enormous page from Plate 11 (Oriental obelisk – Fig. 3a) to Plate 12 (Occidental – Fig. 3b) of volume III of engravings has the déjà vu effect upon the reader, for whom the only key for making the difference is in the damaged part of the base in the front depiction of the Oriental one¹¹. A similar double-effect was the *premier coup-d'oeil* for Jollois and



DÉTAILS DE TROIS FACES DE L'OBÉLISQUE ORIENTAL, DU PALAIS.



DÉTAILS DE TROIS FACES DE L'OBÉLISQUE OCCIDENTAL DU PALAIS.

Devilliers who were puzzled by the precedence of the gigantic duo. After a first impression, their methodical, thorough research enabled them towards deeper insights on the twins¹². First of all, they were not twins. In a careful scrutiny, the Occidental is slightly smaller than the Oriental¹³. Based on this fact, their hypothesis is on the issue of material constraints: on the one hand the difficulty for the stone-carvers of finding two monolithic blocks of such dimensions without fissure or defect; on the other, the technical challenge of transporting and erection of the mole¹⁴. The difficulty of matching the material constraints twice was resolved by the location of an axis of symmetry between the two, and the approximation of size enabled a visual perception of doubleness. Their guess was that such a magnificent block of red granite – uncommon in the area – had to come from the quarries of Syène[Aswan], upstream, and had to be transported on the Nile to their site at Luxor¹⁵. Whether or not their guess was more or less accurate, their archaeological research unearthed the fact that the colossal monoliths of granite were actually movable artefacts. As was shown on the arrival of the obelisk at Place de la Concorde, Luxor was simply an interlude – of about 3,000 years – on its journey from Syène to the Seine. The splitting of the (non)twin was not such a tragedy. The void left by the Occidental moving further West was not the memory of a fratricidal act; rather, it simply implied that the axis of symmetry was displaced from their gate in Egypt to France. More than in temporal terms – as Champollion presented his parallel Ancient/Modern History – the twin aspect of the obelisk-à-Luxor and the obelisk-à-Paris almost becomes a topography of a political condition: the re-enactment of the French Empire bridging centre and periphery, being here and there at the same time.

The obelisk at Concorde

By the time of the arrival of the 1848 Revolution, the obelisk was already secured at the centre of the Madeleine-Place de la Concorde-

National Assembly axis. However, the obelisk was a symbol of a power soon to be overthrown. By placing the obelisk on the centre of the axis, king Louis-Phillippe intended putting an end to the dispute between State and Reform. However, on entering the axis, the displacement of the obelisk could arguably be read as a re-enactment of the dispute, representing certain problems in the inception of the 1848 revolution. Being re-located in Place de la Concorde, the obelisk becomes the manifestation of the tension between mobility and fixity, a crucial historical process for understanding that revolution. The obelisk, in a very literal sense, embeds the tension between these two concepts. Intensifying the function of the axis, the pedestal – so much disputed in the past – signified both the fixity of the needle and the act of displacement. The granite base – originally intended for the equestrian statue of Louis XVI¹⁶ – was engraved in golden traces with the journey Luxor-Paris of the obelisk (Fig. 4). Inscribed in stone, the drawings show the orchestrated movement of the mole; laid down, lifted, rotated and erected in Concorde. The engravings are copies of the original drawings that the engineer Apollinaire Lebas used for illustrating the difficult enterprise he had to carry out. Lebas revisited the famous drawings by the architect Domenico Fontana for the Vatican Obelisk. He followed the connection that Jacques Ignace Hittorff traced between la Concorde and St Peter's Square in 1834 when he was commissioned for the embellishment of the Parisian square (Fig. 5) – illustrating his proposal with a comparative plan of St. Peter's Square. Lebas's publication in 1839 gathered a series of fifteen plates bringing together the epic journey on the Nile to Alexandria and through the Mediterranean to Paris, with the precise calculus of the engineering machines that enabled it (Fig. 6a-6c). The beautiful line drawings combine the precision needed for the task with the apparent lightness achieved by the cranes. However, in this he did not follow Fontana's drawings. For the Italian, the movement was a titanic struggle between the mole and crowd. Large numbers of people were shown in each drawing. Lebas's 'plan of works' are drawings in which no person is shown. It is rather a graceful dance

(previous page)
 Fig. 3a- Jomard,
 M. (Edme-
 François). *Détails
 de Trois Faces
 de l'Obélisque
 Oriental du Palais.
 Thebes/ Louqsor.*
 In *Description de
 L'Égypte*. Vol. III
 Plate 11.1809-
 1828. © New
 York Public
 Library
 (previous page)
 Fig. 3b- Jomard,
 M. (Edme-
 François). *Détails
 de Trois Faces
 de l'Obélisque
 Occidental du
 Palais. Thebes/
 Louqsor.* In
*Description de
 L'Égypte*. Vol. III
 Plate 12.1809-
 1828. © New
 York Public
 Library

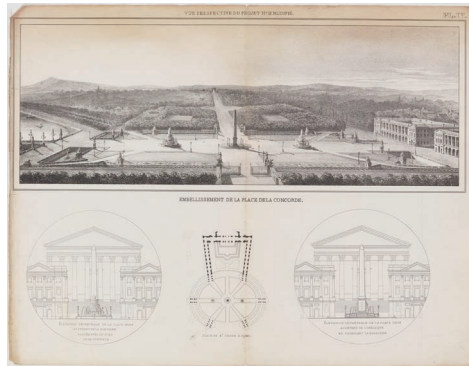
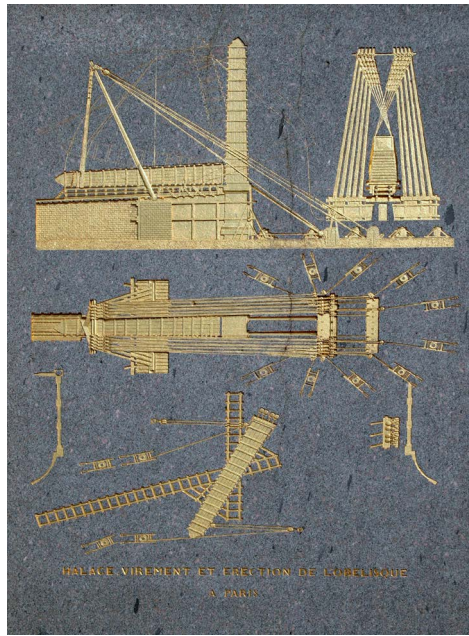


Fig. 4- 'Halage, Virement et érection de l'obélisque'. Engraving in the pedestal of the obelisk at the Place de la Concorde, Paris.

Fig. 5- Jacques Ignace Hittorff. *Embellissements de la place de la Concorde et des Champs-Élysées. Rapport de la Commission...* 1834
©BnF Gallica

between the machinery and the material artefact. One of the most appealing illustrations (Fig. 6b – plate IX) is an unfolding panoramic plan of the obelisk entering in la Concorde. A series of dotted lines indicate the traces of the obelisk's movement. The granite mole moves gracefully from one side of the drawing to its top, supported by the engineering mechanisms. However, there is something eerie about Lebas's lines, as the triumphal entry is met by a vacant square (Fig. 6b – plate VII). If his plans were to schedule the erection of the obelisk in that vein, that was not the case in the actual event of the artefact entering the Place de la Concorde. Perhaps not envisioned by the engineer, at the solemn installation at the centre of the square on October 25, 1836 the obelisk was surrounded with a greeting crowd in a ceremony presided by the king Louis-Phillippe. The celebratory event was intended a full stop in the history of appropriation of the Madeleine-Place de la Concorde-National Assembly axis. However, as the history of the axis unfolded, fixity was again countered by revolution. This was to happen in 1848.

Despite the convoluted history of the construction of the Madeleine-Place de la Concorde-National Assembly axis (Fig. 7), concentrating only on the analysis of its built form would miss the most crucial element of its architecture: the mob. It is precisely the space taken over by the mob that activates the architecture. In the revolution of 1848, the horizontal crowd shaped a revolting spiral whose centre is the vertical needle. One mirroring the other, it is in its alien condition – displaced and losing its sense of belonging in the city – that the obelisk can be understood as a symbol and space of representation for the revolution. The alien in the city becomes a relevant context in which to understand the crisis of 1848.

Despite the warm welcome to the Egyptian émigré, Paris was not an especially inviting context for the outsiders. Migration into the city generated a clash between the foreign and the local. And yet, it is precisely the 1848 revolution that was marked by the loss of sense of locality and an increasing sense of homeliness in the city. As it has been read by Suzanne Nash¹⁷, the Paris where the revolution unfolded

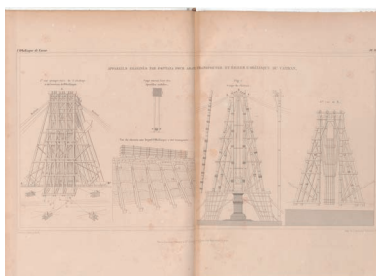
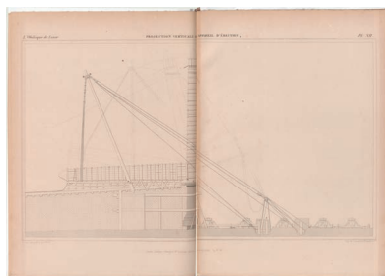
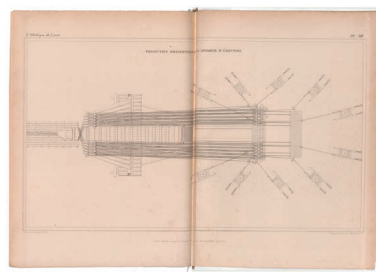
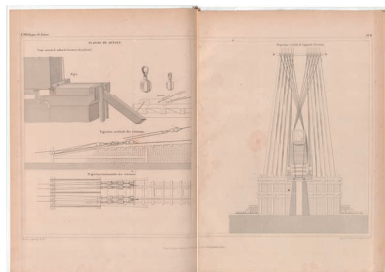
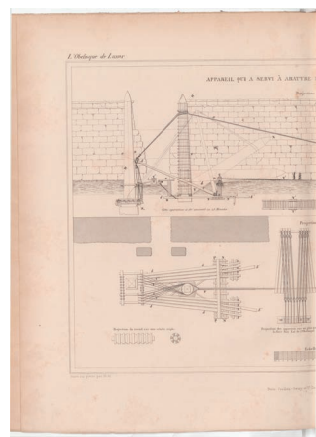
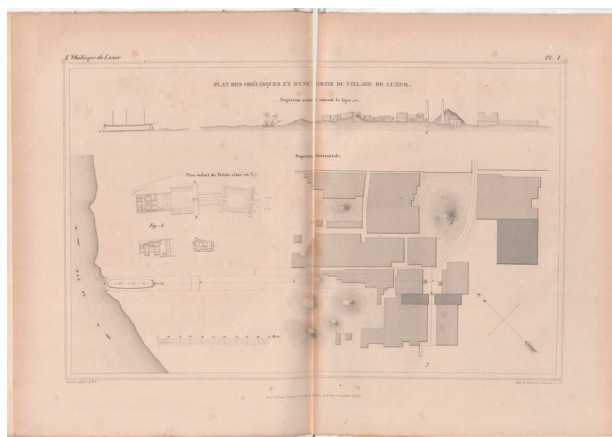
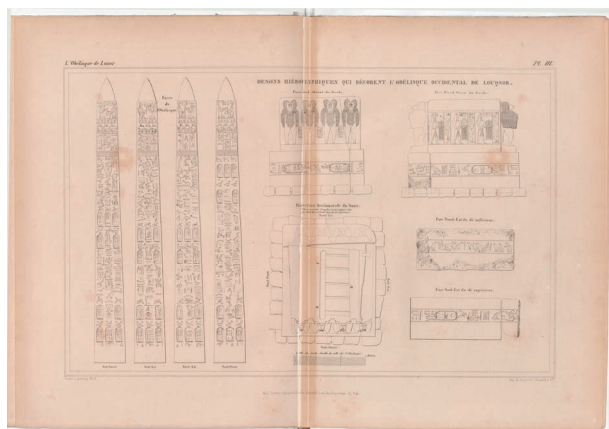
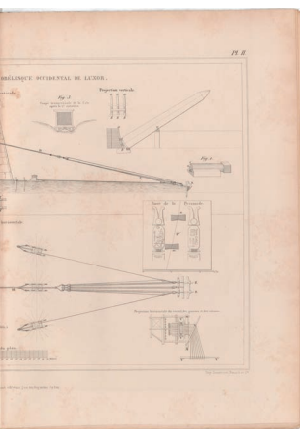


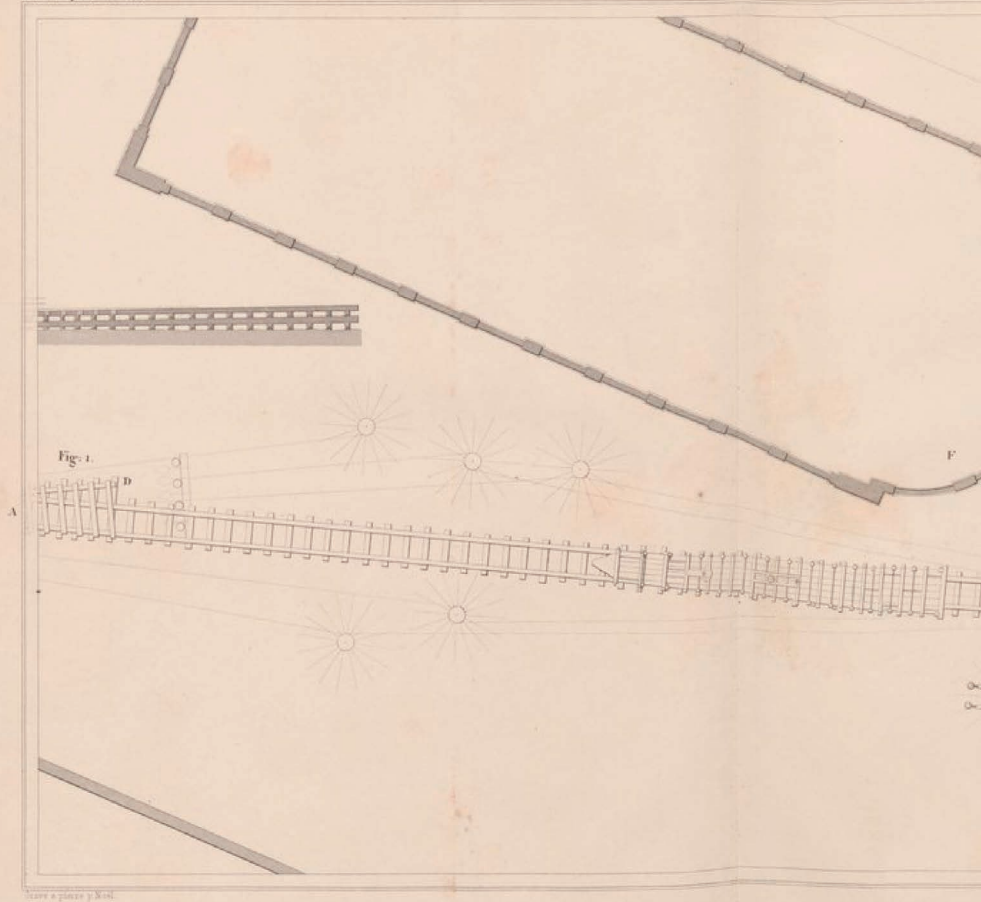
Fig. 6a- Lebas, Apollinaire. *L'Obélisque de Luxor, histoire de sa translation à Paris, description des travaux auxquels il a donné lieu.* 1839.

Plates I-III ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 6b- Lebas, Apollinaire. *L'Obélisque de Luxor, histoire de sa translation à Paris, description des travaux auxquels il a donné lieu.* 1839.

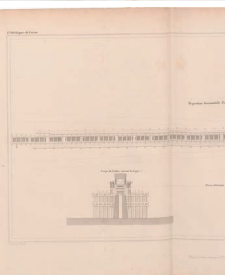
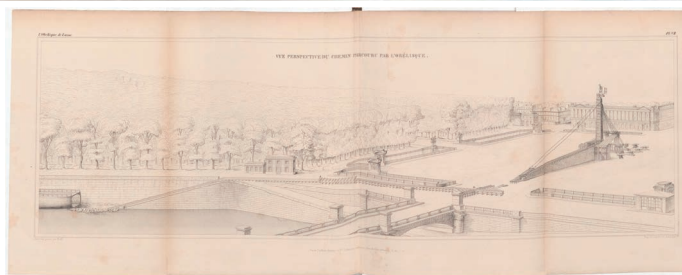
Plates XI-XIV ©BnF Gallica





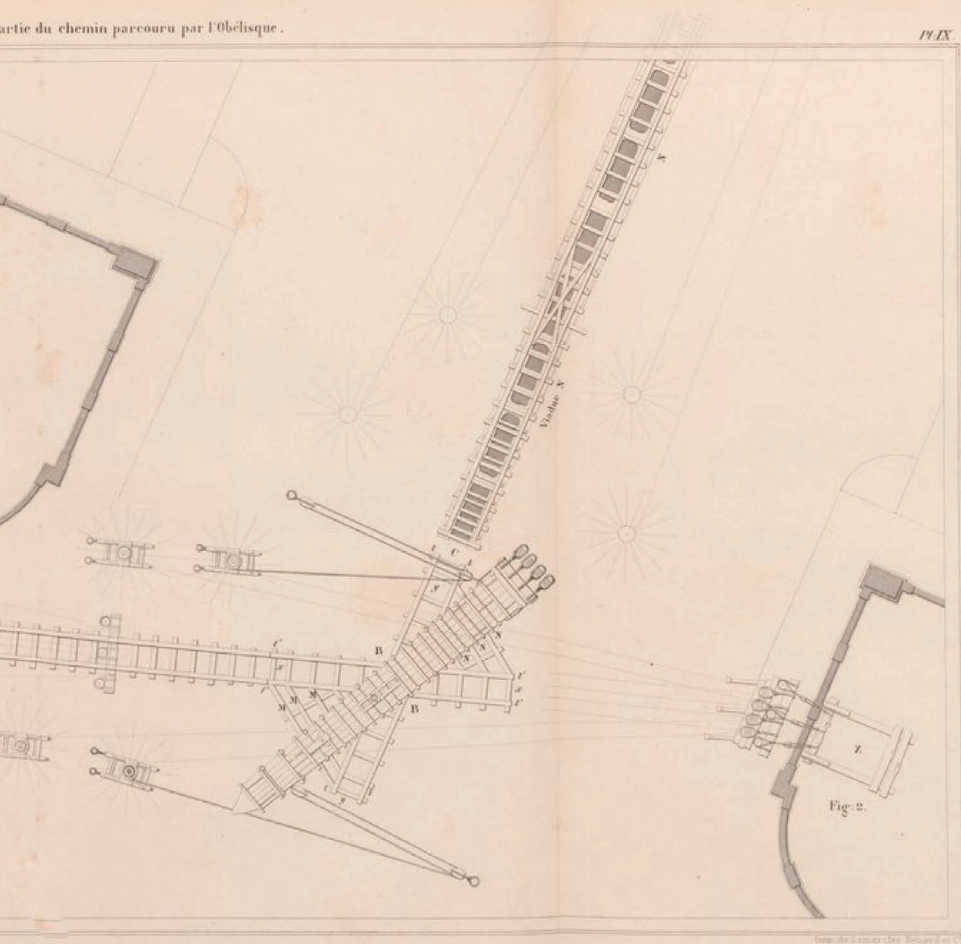
Scale 1/1000

Paris, Carilian-Goeury et V^o Dalm.



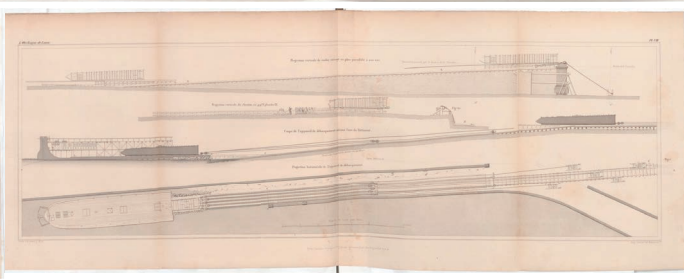
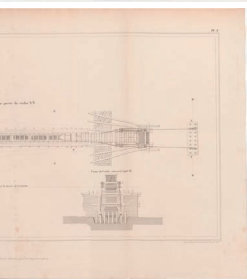
partie du chemin parcouru par l'Obélisque.

17-IX



Longue de l'ensemble des écluses et de la C.

ont été construits Quai des Augustins 29 1/2 m.



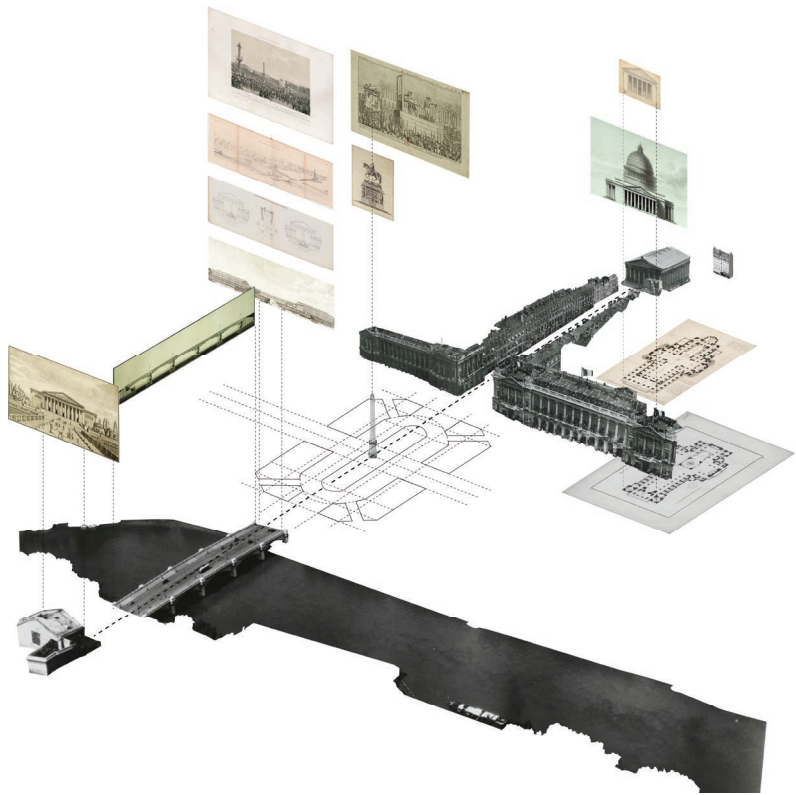


Fig. 7- Axonometric view of the axis Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly with the layering of projects and counter-projects. Image by the author

bore the traces of a metropolis in which belonging was in suspense. (previous page)
 Writing that year, Henri Lecouturier epitomised this condition in the words “there is no such thing as a Parisian society, there are no such persons as Parisian. Paris is nothing but a nomad’s camp.”¹⁸ Not that the Place de la Concorde became a Bedouin campsite with the artefact displaced from Luxor; but rather, the 1846 census of Paris estimated about 88.000 “floating” population (i.e. homeless); seventy five percent of residents in Paris at the time of the revolution had migrated from the country¹⁹. It was, then, Paris a capital in which the established notions of centrality and fringes, the city and the beyond collapsed into one space, blurring the limits between the two. As Louis Desnoyer described the city in his 1844 *Les Étrangers à Paris*, the arrival of alien population transfigured it into “the city of foreigners par excellence (...), a modern Babylon,” in which the features of the local were infrequent, making “the real foreigner the Parisian himself.”²⁰ On February 22nd, 1848 the vertical figure of the obelisk emerging over the horizontal mob can arguably be seen as emblem of the tensions between city and abroad. The obelisk manifested a way in which the metropolis was dealing with its exterior: colonialism as appropriation. Flaubert was to propose a different way of dealing with exteriors with his desert voyage.

Fig. 6c- Lebas, Apollinaire. *L’Obélisque de Luxor, histoire de sa translation à Paris, description des travaux auxquels il a donné lieu.* 1839. Plates VII-X ©BnF Gallica

The apartment

“A week ago I was enraptured by an encampment of gypsies who had stopped in Rouen,” Flaubert wrote to Sand in June 1867:

“This is the third time I’ve seen them, each time with new pleasure. The wonderful thing is that they were arousing the *Hatred* of the Bourgeois...It’s the hatred felt for the Bedouin, the Heretic, the Philosopher, the Hermit, the Poet. And there is fear in this hatred. I’m infuriated by it, being always on the side of minorities.”²¹

This, of course, are words of a writer who was born and died in his parents’ house; a fascination towards the figures of the wanderers and

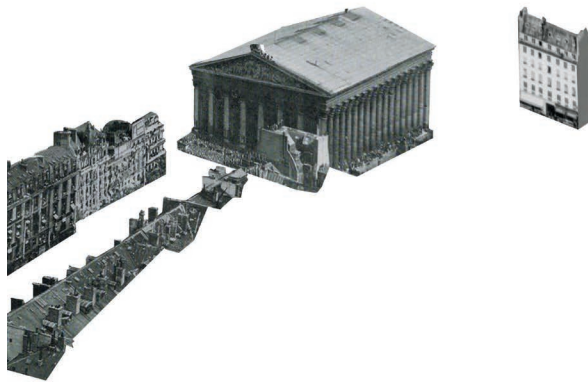


Fig. 8- Axonometric view of the axis Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly showing the position of Du Camp's apartment at the verge of the axis. Image by the author

loners, who challenged preconceived notions of home and bourgeoisie. In progress since 1846, Flaubert was condensing his nomad-heretic-philosopher-hermit-poet love into the main character of his *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine* – finishing it the September following the revolution²². Stepping out to Paris in Saint-Lazare station a day after the riots at the Place de la Concorde, Flaubert walking the street was not looking for the hopes of political reform. Rather, his politically disengaged excursion to Paris under revolution can be conceived as a counter-space to that of the events being unfolded. He was there to witness the riots “from an artist’s perspective”²³ – as he put it upon his arrival. His steps were leading him from Saint-Lazare towards the axis Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly, nevertheless, he remained at its doorstep. The first stop of his itinerary was to meet Maxime du Camp, whose apartment at the time was at number 30, Place de la Madeleine²⁴ (Fig. 8). Aligned with the axis and just beyond the pole of the façade of the Madeleine, Du Camp’s window configured their onlooker’s point of view. Furthermore, it was arguably the departing point for a project that could challenge how the city was unfolding at their feet.

Du Camp and Flaubert were both well-off, lovers of Romantic literature and inclined towards everything Oriental. They had quickly become friends²⁵ since Flaubert’s times as a law student in Paris in 1843. They composed an inverted Quixote-Sancho profile. Flaubert, with his stout presence, added, paradoxically, the quixotic hue: slightly idealistic, with tendency to depression and drawn towards romantic love²⁶. Du Camp was don Quixote in his slim figure, but Sancho in soul (Fig. 9): thorough, meticulous planner, and socially well connected in the cultural circles of Paris. Despite being a Parisian toff, his attitude was poles apart from the flâneur²⁷. It is interesting to note how, to the eyes of the quixotic couple, the epic landscapes of the revolution were rather unheroic, the giants of Paris were demythologised windmills.

In the case of Du Camp, his memories of the revolution, *Souvenirs de l’année 1848*, were published in 1876 as such – as 59



Fig 9- Giraud, E. *Maxime du Camp, 'Father of Thinness' as called in Flaubert in Egypt, A Sensibility on Tour*. © BnF, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FT 4-NA-87 (2)

memories[souvenirs] of a journey, that describes his 'local' Paris with Flaubert. As he introduced them, he set himself to put in writing in order to correct certain misinterpretations that gathered around the controversial events in the years after²⁸. It was his and Flaubert's eyes – disengaged from the conflict – that could record an unbiased memoir, witnessing throughout an almost scientific sojourn, keeping their object at bay. As he affirms in his *Souvenirs*, he was “twenty five, and already affected by indifference to politics.” He was rather in the position of a detached journalist drawn by “the kind of curiosity shared by a writer, traveler, or artist; I was compelled to rub my shoulders with the things, look at them, study them, but never to become actively involved in them.”²⁹ Though extensively rubbing shoulders in the streets during the days of revolution, the window of Place de la Madeleine, 30 was the frame that synthesised his approach. It is from there that Du Camp opens his narrative in the *Souvenirs*. “At that time,” he recalled, “I was living at the Place de la Madeleine (...); through my windows I could see the flower market, the rue Royale, the Place de la Concorde and a part of the façade of the Corps législatif [National Assembly] (...)”³⁰ From there he was able to see how around noon on February, 22nd, “a group of two to three hundred people followed a man of certain age”³¹ – inception of the mob that eventually was to demonstrate in the Place de la Concorde. However, at the time, Du Camp was not concerned about the tense political atmosphere arising in the streets of Paris. Rather, his mind was on an altogether different project, “I was preparing a long voyage that I did in the Orient, during the years 1849, 1850 and 1851.”³² These plans came to fruition, and a year later he was with Flaubert on the way to Alexandria to observe the monuments of Ancient Egypt. Following the well-established tradition of Grand Tour, Du Camp's trip to the verges of the empire constituted a rite of passage for achieving maturity and self-awareness³³; but also, it was a way of contrasting what was going on back home. Their disenchantment with the political atmosphere of the revolution was tightly connected with their fascination with what laid beyond. At the doorstep of his apartment a revolution was giving

an answer to the increasing loss of home in Paris. On the other side of his window frame, his answer was of a very different one.

Du Camp planned his journey to Egypt carefully. Not only did he chart his itinerary carefully well in advance³⁴ but, he even inquired much more in depth into the available traveller experiences of the time. He had at his disposal the works that indicated what was worth seeing. He read extensively the works of his compatriots in Egypt such Jean Chardin's *Voyage en Perse et aux Indes Orientales et autres lieux d'Orient* (1735), and the *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie* (1787) by Comte de Volney – who, being thirty at the time of the voyage, sought a source for enlightenment in travelling, very much what Du Camp was looking for. “I had read and repeatedly heard that of all the ways to develop the mind and to form one’s judgment the most effective was to travel”³⁵, Volney argued. However, Du Camp also gathered notes from the Classics, which presented quests harder to emulate. From Strabo’s *Geography*, to Diodorus Siculus’ library or Pausanias’ ten volumes, Du Camp acquired the attitude of Herodotus, who, in order to put an end to the mythical description of time, travelled to Egypt to witness and hear for himself – making it the approach for being named ‘the father of History’³⁶. As P.A. Cartledge put it³⁷, in order to overcome the myth of Homer, Herodotus had to become Ulysses himself.

For Du Camp’s journey, there was also a myth to demythologise. This myth was given birth through the Napoleonic incursion. Along with the smuggled antiquities that came back from Egypt, there returned to France an allure of fantasy generated around the pharaonic past. Egyptology had archaeological aspirations of scientific research as was argued in the *Description de l’Égypte*. However, the digging up also brought an ‘adding of layers’ of imagination over the past yet to be unearthed. Precisely this can be seen in the frontispiece for the *Description* (Fig.10). It depicts an idealised landscape for the French army arriving in Egypt. Coloured by the intense sunlight moving to dusk, the foreground is composed as a

collage of ruins and fragments gathered from different sites. Behind it, French troops amicably share their rest from the desert journey with the local inhabitants; while the rest of the troops are triumphantly making their entrance through the avenue of sphinxes. The gate that frames their parade is precisely the entrance to the temple of Luxor, in which the oriental obelisk is depicted while the other is hidden behind a column to its fore³⁸. However, the central figure of the composition is an idealised obelisk witnessing the arrival, anonymously described as “an Egyptian obelisk decorated by strips of hieroglyphic sculptures, like the ones that are seen at Philae, Luxor and Heliopolis.”³⁹ Next to it, the background unfolds upstream, with the Nile tracing the route from the pyramids to Elephantine. The depiction is indeed a fantasy; however, opening the volume, it also indexes its scope: “*Ce tableau est un abrégé de toute l’Égypte* [This tableau is a precis of the whole of Egypt]”⁴⁰ It doesn’t only abridge the whole of the country spatially within a single tableau, a perspective which is visually impossible. It also abridges it temporally, overlapping the arrival of the French army with the monuments in full splendour. It was not the state in which they saw the avenue of sphinxes – which at that time had already been beheaded by iconoclasts⁴¹ (Fig.11) – or the ornament of the temples that were desaturated by time. It composed a suspension of time that was neither subsisting anymore, nor had it ever existed. A similar critique was directed by Du Camp towards Theophile Gautier when the latter was imagining life in Spain under Arab rule. Dreaming of his nights in the Alhambra, it was actually a “Gautier that ha[s] never visited either Algeria or Cairo, [that] imagined Arab life as something that is not and, overall, has never been.”⁴² Similarly, the frontispiece of the *Description* got romantically colorised from its first edition (Fig. 12) into the second (Fig. 10). Against this fantasy that had never been, Du Camp’s journey to Egypt was a register for showing what was truly there. If Du Camp’s *Souvenirs* of 1848 were written for correcting certain misconceptions about the events of the revolution, the souvenirs he was to bring from Egypt were to debunk the deformed imagination of what was abroad.

Fig. 10- Panckoucke, C.L.F. *Fac-simile des monuments coloriés de L'Égypte* D'après le Tableau de CLF Panckoucke, chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, éditeur de la description de l'Égypte, 2e édition, 1825. In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. I. Frontispiece. 1825. © New York Public Library



FAC-SIMILE DES MONUMENS COLORIÉS DE L'EGYPTE

D'APRÈS LE TABLEAU DE C. L. F. PANCKOUCKE.

Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Editeur de la description de l'Egypte. 2^e Edition.

1835.

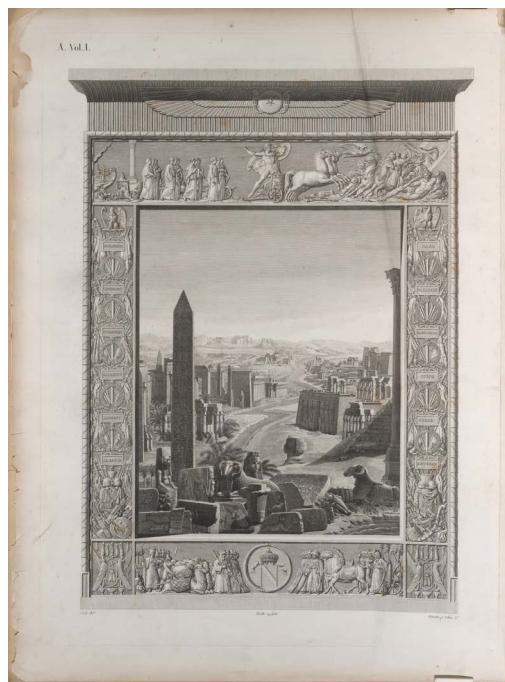


Fig. 11- Balzac & Chabrol. *Vue et Détails des Sphinx de L'Avenue des Propylées du Palais. Thèbes, Karnak.* In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. 3 Plate 46. © New York Public Library

Fig. 12- Cécile Françoise-Charles. *Frontispiece.* In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. 1. 1809-1828. © New York Public Library

Although eventually his major argument was formed around the camera he was to carry to Egypt, prior to seeing things for himself he collected quite thoroughly what others had seen. The adventures of Giovanni Battista Belzoni, the reflections of Champollion the Young, the periodising of Lepsius, the catalogues of Comte Caylus; the picturesque taste of Taylor and Reybaud⁴³...perusing through a variety of travelogues before departure became a way for perambulating in another's shoes. He gathered this material in extensive reading notes that are kept in his archives at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France⁴⁴. These notes were compulsively ordered, arranged and rearranged, and indexed in alphabetical order. He developed a system of organisation indexed by name of place; this enabled him to compare different readings of the same site or monument. Historian Julia Ballerini, on reviewing Du Camp's notes, affirms that the French Man inherited the encyclopaedic desire of the Napoleonic *Description* in that he had a drive to give a coherent unity to the culture of Egypt, past and present. She compares him to Alexander von Humboldt, "a complete walking academy."⁴⁵ And, so, it is not surprising that the notes also travelled with him to Alexandria⁴⁶. Nevertheless, his mania for sorting was already a key system for seeing Egypt, as a cultural grid superimposed over the landscape. His Sancho's standpoint framed his vision before departing for adventure.

We can imagine Du Camp sitting down at his desk, planning his trip to Egypt while the revolution was erupting. Engulfed in the preparations, his way of looking at Egypt was mediated by the precursors who had been there before. However, if the categorising grid became the lenses towards the desert, the interior of his apartment framed the revolution that was unfolding on the other side of his windowpane. The two mediating elements – bureau and window frame – were just as distant as the casting of his glance down to the desk was from the lifting up of his head. Both were intertwined. Preparing his journey, the *bureau* at his apartment over which charts and notes were laid down was a relevant part of the frame, not for looking at Egypt

only, but for Du Camp's appreciation of the revolution as well. The prospectus of traveling outside Paris made him appreciate the space of the revolution as an 'other' to what he was searching for. He was treating Paris with disdain, looking over it, separated from it – from his *bureau* looking down into the city – ; Paris was a space to flee from – his plans for it were already spread on the table. Despite discrediting Gautier's position abroad, he, nevertheless, did adhere to his position towards back home. "I think that", Du Camp pondered the reason why Gautier revisited Moorish Spain,

“s’il fait un retour vers le passé, c’est par esprit d’opposition, par mauvaise humeur contre les habitudes civilisées, les habitudes parisiennes qu’il a fuies avec empressement, et qui le poursuivent partout où il regarde (...)

[if he returned to the past, it was in a spirit of opposition, a bad humour against the civilised habits, the Parisian custom that he fled eagerly, and that pursue him wherever he looked (...)]”

The return to the past was not that much a question of unearthing a glorious antiquity. Rather, it was a quest for finding an answer to his contemporary condition back home. Du Camp, as the revolution, was searching for an answer to Paris. However, on looking through the window just-off the Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly axis, he was intending a different one to the cycling struggle of revolution/counter-revolution. The window frame was both a device for observing revolution and, overall, the mediator of the 'detachment' with which Flaubert was disregarding the revolted city.

So far, we have seen two realms – space of revolution and the desert voyage – starting to be constructed in opposition. We have also seen two elements that mediated them: the bureau full of references of former travellers – mediating the way Du Camp was seeing the desert before departure – and the window-frame – edge between metropolis and apartment, and mediator of how Du Camp was looking at the revolution from a detached standpoint. What we will problematise

now is the separation between the two realms. First, we will observe the suspension of the dichotomy between metropolis and interior operated by revolution. Following it, we will question the possibility of a suspension between metropolis and abroad. If the conceptual split between metropolis and interior – seemingly clear before – was being shaken by the revolution; is it possible to understand the split between metropolis and abroad also shaking, and that a continuum between both was emerging? Du Camp's apartment was precisely at the verge of both: on the one hand a frame between the city and the interior, on the other a frame between the city and abroad.

The Window-frame

If we first look at the split city/interior, we can observe how in Du Camp's apartment this mediation was framed by his window. Revolution, unfolding at its feet, was putting the dichotomy city/interior in suspension. This has been the traditional understanding of the revolution as mechanism of expansion of the modern metropolis. As read by Reinhart Koselleck, revolution emerges precisely from the split. In his analysis of the 1789 French Revolution, the fall of the Absolutist State was carried out from the creation of a realm beyond it⁴⁷. The bourgeois society succeeded on constructing an interior that laid beyond the domain of the State. To the political space of the State, a separated moral interior was counterposed. Detached from the polis, secluded within its realm of morality, it was precisely from that moral interior that the critique to the Absolutist regime started. However, it is at the moment when the moral critique claims for solution that it has no other option than getting politicised. The solution to "the tension between morality and politics, had to be a political decision."⁴⁸ And, with that decision, the split between both was not clear-cut anymore, but remained temporarily in suspension. In the 1848 one, Flaubert and Du Camp declared detachment from the political. However, as the revolution unfolded, this dichotomy was to collapse – as we will see.



Fig. 13- Vallet, Charles. *Destruction du Palais-Royal. Voitures de la famille royale brûlées sur la place du Palais-Royal* from *Révolution de 1848*, no 11. gallica.bnf.fr. 0480. ©BnF Gallica

Du Camp's indifference towards politics frames his narrative of the struggle in the streets. However, that detachment into a moral interior was a paradoxical position. To understand the suspension between streets/home, I propose looking at Du Camp's experience of the revolution under Freud's concept of *unheimlich*. Freud concluded the article in which he tried to disentangle the charged meaning of the word affirming that it is really in the linguistic movement from *heimliche* into its opposite that we can find the core of the question. The *unheimliche* "is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it" as it is found precisely out of place. Du Camp found the *unheimlich* presence at the core of the revolution. Narrated in his *Souvenirs* under the entry *La Proclamation de la République* [The Proclamation of the Republic], the hours preceding the official proclamation at the Hôtel-de-Ville were one of the events that most lively remained in his memory. Following the crowd that entered the Palais-Royal after Louis Philippe's abdication, Du Camp and Flaubert found themselves in front of the serving table in the dining hall. The food remained cold after the rushed departure of the royal family. The raiders sat at the table implying that "C'est notre banquet de la réforme! [This is our reformist banquet!]"⁴⁹. It was the longed-for banquet of the revolution, that so many *banquets* prefigured the year before. But by the end of the meal, the night brought "le génie de la destruction [the genius of destruction]"⁵⁰, with its pillage and loot. Five big fires were set off at the door of the palace, at the place du Palais-Royal. Entering the private apartments, the revolutionaries requisitioned the furniture, glass and porcelain, burning them in front of the masses (Fig.13). Du Camp was horrified, trying to prevent the destruction of works of art and antiques; but nothing could be done⁵¹. In Du Camp's narrative, the 'genius of destruction' imbues the space of revolution. However, it is when it turns the interiors of Palais Royal upside-down that revolution shows its unsettling tint. It is the emergence of "something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light"⁵² in the Freudian term. In a very literal way, Du Camp's scene presents the

heimliche[homely] coming to light, into the public realm of the bonfires. However, if Freud qualified the *unheimliche* as the displacement of the *heimliche* to the exterior where it doesn't belong, can we look back at Du Camp's apartment and see his desert voyage as a project in search of the *heimliche* in a paradoxical movement further away? As has been reviewed by Edward Said, Egypt and Paris were tightly connected in Du Camp and Flaubert's journey, in that, paradoxically "Flaubert was seeking a homeland"⁵³ abroad.

The bureau

Du Camp's bureau resembles the Freudian desk. Replete with notes, reviews, etchings and charts, Du Camp was searching for an answer in the monuments of the pharaohs. Freud was also in search of answers in the archaeological past. If we observe the famous photograph that Edmund Engelman took of Freud at his office in Vienna⁵⁴, the psychoanalysts' interior is one populated by foreign artefacts. Sphinxes, camels, and busts of pharaohs compose his interior (Fig. 14). Surrounded by his collection of small antiques, Freud defined his discovery of psychoanalysis as digging up of the "psychical material layer by layer, and we liked to compare it with the technique of excavating a buried city."⁵⁵ Famously, the Austrian doctor introduced his process in his lecture on 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' (April, 1896) as a tour through an ancient city in which the psychoanalyst

"may content himself with inspecting what lies exposed to view or...he may start upon the ruins, clear away the rubbish...uncover what is buried. If his work is crowned with success, the discoveries are self-explanatory...the fragments of columns can be filled out into a temple; the numerous inscriptions...yield undreamed-of information about the events of the remote past...*Saxa loquuntur!* [Stones talk!]"⁵⁶

His desk, as the psychoanalytical stones, was also self-explanatory. Freud, surrounded by his archaeological figurines, as historian Janine

Burke has observed, was deeply connected with his medical method⁵⁷. It was an assurance of how, despite the polemic after introducing the method into the scientific realm with that lecture, it had worked. Seating behind his desk, Freud secured a position for 'seeing...but not [be] seen myself'⁵⁸, through which the patient could talk levelheaded as she laid supine in the couch. Surrounding doctor and patient, the archaeological collection mirrored the successes he had already unearthed. However, in a condensed manner, Freud's desk embedded the connection of the figurines and the birth of psychoanalysis. It is amongst its populated surface that psychoanalysis was discovered, in Freud's writings (Fig. 15). The figurines were the muses of his writing practice condensed in the desk. Du Camp's bureau can arguably be seen as a 'Freudian-desk-yet-to-come'. Enclosed by the notes and charts for his Egyptian sojourn, he foresaw a project in which the stones would talk. However, his viewing position through the window was an affirmation that the boulders of the barricades were lying mute; the revolution was not the answer. One of the remaining early photographs of the 1840s precisely depicts the Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly axis (Fig. 16). Due to the long-time exposure, the disturbances of the riots are depicted as a ruinous state of the street in which no one is fighting. Only the empty barricades countervail the black presence of the obelisk at the Place de la Concorde. The ruins that were to talk to Du Camp were not Parisian, but the ones he was to photograph abroad.

The destruction of the home

We have seen two projects finding their vanishing point at the tip of the obelisk de la Concorde. They were both responding to an increasing unhomely existence in the modern metropolis. The first project is that of the revolution, whose spatial paradigm was moving from the confined 'private' space of the banquets into the rampage in the streets. It was a re-activation of the convoluted historical







Fig. 16- Hippolyte Bayard. *Barricades, Rue Royale in Paris.*
1848.

construction of the Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly axis. The second project reacted to the loss of identity in the metropolis by taking it *en abyme*. It was a paradoxical seeking out of home – of an interior – in the absolute exterior of the desert. Their movement was to trace the itinerary of the alienated obelisk back to Luxor.

However, if the project of Flaubert and Du Camp, was seemingly less violent than the revolution, it had actually violence at its trigger point. The search for a home abroad entailed the destruction of one's room. If Revolution was to unfold his Genius of Destruction in the power-struggle, for Du Camp the genius was to operate at his own home. The surpassing of the crisis had to go through the destruction of 'his apartment walls'.

Despite not being able to fully discard his own cultural background by packing his extensive notes of Orientalist books, sending them ahead of him to Alexandria, Du Camp indeed tried to uproot his notions of bourgeois home. In April 1849, just six months before departing to Egypt, Du Camp composed his poem *La Maison Démolie* [The Demolished House]⁵⁹. Opening at its walls, the poem presents the demolishers arriving at his house. Following a spiral inward movement, Du Camp describes the destruction of the stair, the salon, the room...each of these spaces enacts the memories of the loves, work and frustrations that have inhabited its past; but also the projects for the future that were informed in the wrecking house.

“C’est là d’où sont partis mes désirs de voyage,/Mes aspirations vers les grands paysages/ (...)M’a conduit aux déserts, et m’a montré la place (vv. 37-38,41) [It is there that my desires for travelling started,/ my ambitions for the grandiose landscapes/ (...) [it] has driven me to the deserts, and has showed me the place]”

The case of Maison Du Camp was not an anomalous one. The threat of a Paris becoming a *maison demolie* itself belonged to pre-revolutionary times, more than to the demolitions of its haussmanisation. Just some months after, Gautier depicted a Paris in ruins, desolate and

(previous page)

Fig. 14- Engelman, Edmund. *Sigmund Freud sitting at his desk*. May 1938.

From *Sigmund Freud. Vienna IX. Berggasse 19*. 1998. Universe Publishing. Vienna. p.66-67.

(previous page)

Fig. 15- Engelman, Edmund. *View of the writing desk in the study*. May 1938.

From *Sigmund Freud. Vienna IX. Berggasse 19*. 1998. Universe Publishing. Vienna. p.57.

abandoned in his essay *Du Beau Antique et du Beau Moderne* [On Antique Beauty and Modern Beauty]⁶⁰. This harbinger of death was present as social imaginary, as reminder of the possibility of total *demolition* of Paris in its pre-revolution state of crisis. However, Du Camp's destruction has a character different from the one of the mid-nineteenth century popular imagination. It is more in line with Walter Benjamin's 'destructive character'. Destruction of the room is not only nostalgic, but paradoxically eventually turns liberating in that it "make[s] room."⁶¹ The shift in the poem comes by the time Du Camp's movement reaches the innermost realm of the room – his tabernacle (v.140), in the poetic sense. At that point, the demolition turns into implosion, and the harbinger of destruction turns into an agent of renewal, rejecting all the values that were condensed within the walls. "Que tout s'écroule donc! Quant à moi, peu m'importe!/ Quand de cette maison j'ai traversé la porte,/ J'ai pris, comme un enfant, mon amour dans mes bras (v.171-173) [So, that everything collapses!/ As for me, nothing matters./ When I leave through the door,/ I took, as a child, my love in my arms.]"

Standing at the outer edge of his house, *unhomely*, uprooted from his home, Du Camp was ready to get moving. The demolition of his apartment was the last movement for setting out on the journey. With the fall of its walls, he was shifting the frame with which they were observing the revolution. The edge at which they were standing was not anymore to be the one between city and home, but rather they displaced themselves to the margin between city and abroad. Having uprooted the window that set up their vision of Paris, what was to be the frame that mediated the city and the desert?

Quite literally, the frame was to be the one of his camera. Four years before departure, Du Camp had already started his siren songs to convince Flaubert to join him in his journeys.

"Si jamais tu fais le voyage d'Orient, cher vieux, je le ferai avec toi, et alors tous deux, unis comme nous le sommes, voyant avec les mêmes yeux, nous isolant parfaitement au milieu de tous, nous pourrons faire

d'admirables excursions. [If you ever take a trip to the Orient, old friend, I will go with you, and then the two of us – close as we are, seeing with the same eyes, perfectly alone even in the midst of things – will be able to make wonderful journeys.]”⁶² “Seeing with the same eyes” was too much of a wish. Quixote and Sancho had distinctive points of view. Nonetheless, vision became a crucial question for their desert trip. An adjustment of their pupils was made ready well in advance. Weeks before their departure, two crates full of saddles, camera tent and vessels specially designed for the chemicals needed for the production of calotypes, were dispatched to Marseille⁶³. Du Camp’s frame of vision was literally packed and sent ahead. Meanwhile “my passion for the open road”, as Flaubert was writing to a friend in May before departure, was a more romantic enchantment with which he was envisioning their sojourn. “Right now I’m beginning to make preparations”⁶⁴, he closed the letter. Stripped-down from their Parisian home, carrying only camera and literary notes, on 29th October, 1849 they left Paris, ready to set into a Quixotesque voyage in the desert.

“On the fourth [of November], in overcast, dirty weather we boarded the *Nil* [at Marseilles], a steam packet of 250 horse-power which rolled like a drunken man and made but little headway.”⁶⁵ Just a decade later, Charles Baudelaire wrote the concluding poem of *Le Fleurs du Mal*, dedicating it to his friend Maxime du Camp. *Le Voyage* summarises Du Camp’s attitude:

“(...) the true voyagers are only those who leave
Just to be leaving; hearts light, like balloons,
They never turn aside from their fatality
And without knowing why they always say: ‘Let’s go!’”⁶⁶

Endnotes

1. cf. Benjamin, Walter. *Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century* in *The Arcades Project*. Trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. 1999. London. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. p. 12. In fact, his notes for the Exposé of 1935 are chronologically arranged, starting with December, 1848. cf. Ibid., p. 899.

2. Flaubert, Gustave. *Sentimental Education*. 1964. London. Penguin Books. p.293.

3. Three main architectural features developed the convoluted history of the axis: the National Assembly, the Church of the Madeleine and the Place de la Concorde. In one of its extremes, the Corinthian facade of the National Assembly was proposed by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1806 as a device to mirror that of the Temple of Glory (Church of the Madeleine) under construction at the time. As two poles of the line, the two facades mirrored each other composing a symmetry whose centre was at the Place de la Concorde. On arguing for the need of realigning the facade of the Palais Bourbon where the National Assembly was to be hosted – at the time, named the Council of the Five Hundreds – Bernard Poyet (1742-1824) architect of the colonnade at the Assemblée, argued, “*En adoptant la proposition de réaliser notre Campo Vaccino, on sent qu’il est indispensable d’y faire participer l’édifice de la Madeleine, ainsi que le Palais du Conseil des Cinq-Cents, en leur donnant le caractère qui convient à chacun.* [On adopting the proposal for developing our Campo Vaccino, we believe that it is indispensable to involve the building of the Madeleine, as well as the Palace of the Council of the Five Hundred, giving them the character that is suitable for each]” (Poyet, Bernard, *Projets de places et édifices à ériger pour la gloire et l’utilité de la République*. 1799-1800. Paris. Les archives de la Révolution française ; 12.515. BnF. p.5) Poyet traced a drawing for the Museum and square in la Concorde that dates years back to 1789 (Poyet, Bernard. *View of the Proposal for Place Louis XV, Paris*, 1789. ©BnF Gallica) (cf. Yvan Christ, *Paris des Utopies*, 2011, éd. Nicolas Chaudun, p. 141). The eyes of the planner are set at one of the ends of the axis, elevated over the missing facade of the National Assembly that eventually he was to design. At his feet, the foreground is envisioned with the finished form of the Pont de la Concorde – back then Pont Louis XV – that was at that time under construction. A naval engineering project that, even in its foundations – as they were being erected – had already the traces of a grapple. Poyot’s depiction envisaged the traits of the works following the proposal of the engineer Jean-Rodolphe Perronet, rather than the critical revisit of the project proposed by Étienne-Louis Boullée with a mythical bridge of boats whose piers are literally in the form of vessels (Boullée, Etienne-Louis (1728-1799). Dessinateur ; Perronet, Jean Rodolphe (1708-1794). Illustrateur. *Projet du pont de la place Louis XV assujetti aux données de celui de Mr. Perronet : [élévation géométrale] : [dessin] / [Boullée]*. 1787. ©BnF Gallica) – which historian Antoine Picon understands as a way of correcting the engineering traces in order “to rearchitect them with the aid of a symbolic decoration that recalls the mythic origin.” (Picon, Antoine, *Introduction* in Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis of the Lectures on Architecture: with Graphic Portion of the Lectures on Architecture*. 2000, Getty Publications. p.23 and note 53). Nevertheless, even though the dispute architect-engineer was unfolding as the piers were being erected with a victory of the latter, in the summer of 1789 the quarrel turned between revolution and regime, the first having the last word by finalising the construction of the bridge using dimension

stones from the demolished Bastille.

In a similar 'under-construction' state was the façade of the Madeleine, whose columns were built to the height of its capitals. In Poyet's proposal for the Place de la Concorde, the background is marked by the presence of the yet-to-come dome for the proposed church of the Madeleine – later on, in 1800, Poyet proposed the site of the Madeleine for installing a Pantheon of the Arts (cf. Booth, David W. *Some Little-Known Designs by Louis-Pierre Baltard and Jean-Baptiste Rondelet for the Transformation of the Church of the Madeleine into a Temple of Glory* in *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, *Études sur l'architecture et son environnement / Studies on Architecture and its Environment* (1989), pp. 147-154, 251-261). The profile represented in the drawing was a parti by Guillaume-Martin Couture that borrowed inspiration from Soufflot's Sainte-Geneviève for building a church of Greek cross in plan, covered by a large dome, headed by a facade in the form of a peristyle of Corinthian order. By the time of Poyet's drawing, with the works in the portico unfinished and the 1789 Revolution not being fond of church-building, the works for the Madeleine came to standstill, pondering which use the monument might have. The question was not solved until 1806 when Napoleon decreed it to become a temple for the glory of the French Army. It was then that the project by Pierre-Alexandre Vignon of a peripteros temple was selected for construction following a competition in which all major architects in the city participated (Léveil, Jean-Arnould (1806–1866). *Façade of the Madeleine, Paris*. Mid-19th century. 50.3 x 67 cm ©Metropolitan Museum New York) (Claude-Etienne de Beaumont was granted the first prize. However, due to a conflict following the result, Napoleon himself had to intervene, granting the prize to Vignon. For the competition for converting the Madeleine in a temple for the glory of the French Army cf. *ibid.* Bernard Poyet also participated in it). The revisited proposal implied a shift of the sacred Greek cross into a secular Greco-Roman reading. The 'temple of Glory' was a movement away from the Old Regime into the Empire, tracing the architectural references to the Roma Imperiale. Vignon's facade and Poyet's peristyle for the National Assembly became then the two endings of the axis that Poyet himself was envisioning. However, if Poyet's 1789 forecast got most of it wrong – with all of the already projected structures being modified or unbuilt, including his own proposal, main feature of the drawing, of a four-volume museum that was never carried out – when changing his foretelling speculations from drawing into text, he didn't miss the point that far. The text with which he described his project dates a decade later than the drawing (1799–1800). However, it still preceded the Napoleonic decree by six years. As he described it, his was "the proposal for developing our Campo Vaccino" – name with which the Imperial Fora in Rome was known – fashionable at the time through Napoleon's Italian campaigns – to which Puyot makes reference in the opening of the text as the context in which the proposal emanated (cf. Poyet, Bernard. 1799–1800. p.3). It was a spot he knew well first-hand after his time in the French Academy in Rome during

1769. However, when looking back at the 1789 drawing, the centre of the Place de la Concorde vaguely resembles the Campo, neither in its contemporary ruinous state, nor in its Imperial splendour. Rather, the square is centred around an equestrian sculpture of Louis XV—which in fact was dressed *à la romaine* – that was inaugurated in 1763, creation of Edme Bouchardon and Jean-Baptiste Pigalle (Mariette, Pierre-Jean (1694-1774). *Description des travaux qui ont précédé, accompagné et suivi la fonte en bronze d'un seul jet de la statue équestre de Louis XV, le Bien-Aimé / dressée sur les mémoires de M. L'empereur,...* par M. Mariette,.... 1768. ©BnF Gallica).

4. cf. Note 3.

5. cf. *Histoire véritable de l'obélisque de Luxor, depuis sa naissance jusqu'à ce jour, publiée par un Égyptien*. Almanach Curieux. 1837. Paris, Chassaignon. p.9.

6. cf. Solé, Robert, *Le Grand Voyage de l'Obélisque*. 2004. Paris, Le Seuil. p. 33.

7. Ibid. p.X.

8. cf. Dobie, Madeleine. *Foreign bodies: Gender, Language, and Culture in French Orientalism*. 2001. Stanford. Stanford University Press.

9. *Description de L'Égypte ou Recueil des Observations et des Recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant L'Expédition de l'Armée Française. Publié par les Ordres de sa Majesté l'Empereur Napoléon Le Grand*. 1809-1828. Paris. Imprimerie impériale.

10. ibid. p. 187.

11. Reason why Champollion was hesitant on transporting this one to Paris. cf. Champollion-Figeac, Jacques-Joseph. *L'Obélisque de Louqsor transporté à Paris, Notice historique, descriptive et archæologique sur ce monument par M. Champollion-Figeac ; avec la figure de l'obélisque et l'interprétation de ses inscriptions hiéroglyphiques, d'après les dessins et les notes manuscrites de Champollion le jeune*. 1833. Paris. p. X.

12. *Description de L'Égypte*. Chapter IX. Section VII. p. 186.

13. cf. ibid. p. 188.

14. cf. ibid.

15. cf. ibid. p. 187.

16. cf. Note 3.

17. cf. Nash, Suzanne. *Home and Its Dislocations*. 1993. Albany: State University of New York Press.

18. As quoted in ibid., p. 10.

19. cf. ibid.

20. As quoted in Ballerini, Julia. *The Stillness of Hajj Ishmael: Maxime Du Camp's 1850 Photographic Encounters*. 2010. New York. iUniverse. p. 14.

21. Paulson, William. *Hearth and Homelessness: Place, Story, and Novel in Flaubert's Sentimental Education* in ibid., p. 85

22. For the influence that witnessing the revolution might have had in Flaubert's *Temptations of Saint Anthony*, see Brown, Frederick. *Flaubert in 1848* in *The Hudson Review*, vol. 58, no. 2 (Summer, 2005), p. 212-217.
23. As quoted in Brown, Frederick. *Flaubert in 1848* in *The Hudson Review*, vol. 58, no. 2 (Summer, 2005), p. 199.
24. cf. Du Camp, Maxime. *Souvenirs de l'année 1848: la révolution de février, le 15 mai, l'insurrection de juin*. 1876. Paris. Librairie Hachette et Cte. p.24
25. Brown, Frederick. 2005, p. 195.
26. Though at the time of their first meeting in March 1843, Flaubert was a "tall, handsome, athletic twenty-two-year-old." Ibid.
27. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 52.
28. Du Camp, Maxime. 1876. p. 2. And he goes back to it on his conclusions. pp. 295-301.
29. Ibid., p. 40.
30. Ibid., p. 24.
31. Ibid., p. 36
32. Du Camp, Maxime. 1876. p. 6.
33. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 52.
34. Ballerini affirms that Flaubert was even able to agree a rendezvous with someone for May 1851, some three years in advance – a meeting that eventually didn't take place. Ballerini delves deeper in Du Camp's plan. See Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 52.
35. As quoted by Ballerini in Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 55.
36. Cicero famously baptised Herodotus as such, by the work the Greek developed in *The Histories* (440BC). Herodotus considered his journey down the Nile as far south as the island of Elephantine as a relevant evidence of his argument. "*From no other man could I learn anything. But this much I learnt by the farthest inquiry that I could make, by my own travel and sight as far as the city of Elephantine, and beyond that by question and hearsay.*" (2. 29.1)
37. Cartledge, P. A. *Taking Herodotus Personally* in *The Classical World*, Vol. 102, No. 4 (Summer 2009), pp. 371-382.
38. Paradoxically, the depiction predates Méhémet Ali's decision of donating the obelisks to France.
39. 'Description du Tableau' in *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. 1. *Antiquités. Planches*. p. 4.
40. Ibid.
41. cf. *Description de L'Égypte*. Chapter IX, Section VIII, p. 254

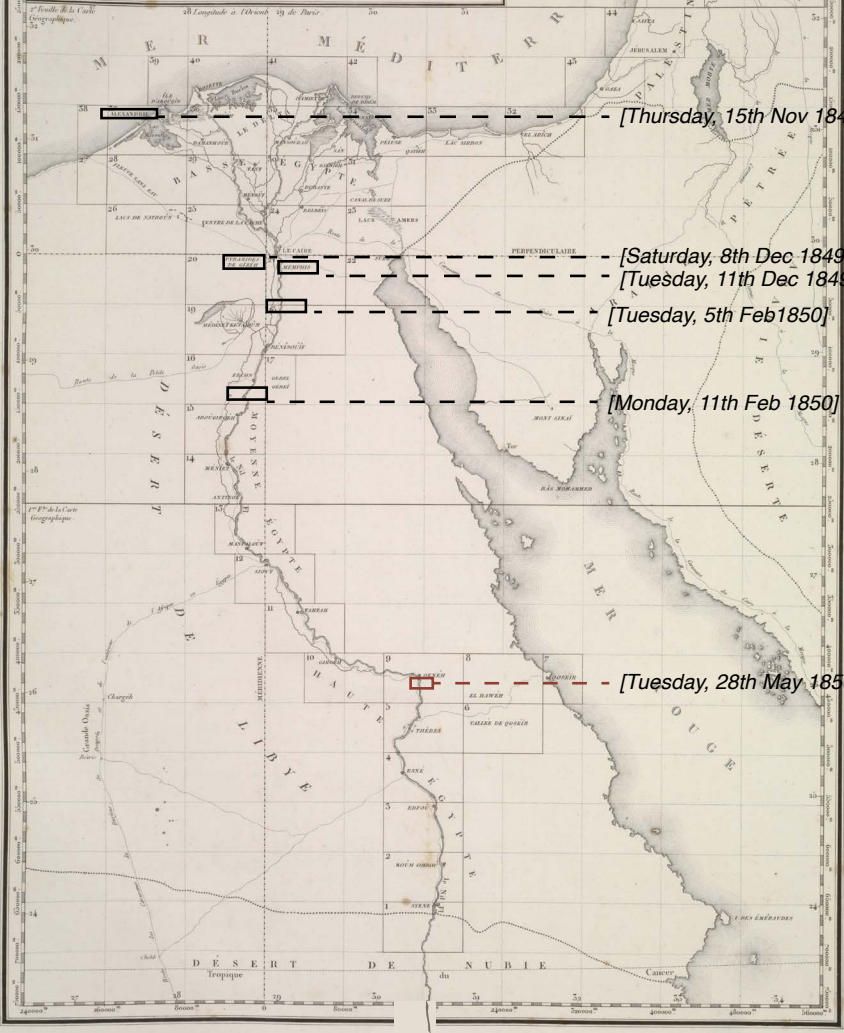
42. Du Camp, Maxime. *Theophile Gautier*. Paris, Hachette. p.109.
43. Following the notes in the archives, Ballerini provides an exhaustive list of the books Du Camp read previous to the journey. See Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 52-58.
44. cf. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. 54.
46. Ibid., p. 60.
47. Koselleck, Reinhart. *Critique and Crisis. Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*. 1988. Cambridge, Massachusetts. The MIT Press. p.11.
48. Ibid., p.127.
49. Du Camp, Maxime. 1876. p. 94.
50. Ibid., p. 96.
51. Ibid., p.101.
52. Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. 2003. London, Penguin Classics. p. 148. In this notion of the uncanny [unheimliche] coming from the homely [heimliche], Freud uses Schelling definition.
53. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 1987. London. Penguin Books Ltd. p.180. As Said clarifies, it was Jean Bruneau who first affirmed that “[f]or Flaubert the Orient gradually became a kind of homeland.” In Steegmuller, Francis. *Flaubert in Egypt. A Sensibility on Tour*. 1972. London. The Bodley Head. p. 12.
54. cf. Engelman, Edmund. *A Memoir in Sigmund Freud. Vienna IX. Berggasse 19*, with an introduction by Inge Scholz-Strasser. 1998. Universe Publishing. Vienna.
55. As quoted in Burke, Janine. *The Sphinx on the Table. Sigmund Freud's Art Collection and the Development of Psychoanalysis*. 2006. New York. Walker & Company from Freud, Sigmund. *Studies on Hysteria in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. and trans. by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud*. 2001. London. Vintage. Vol. II, p.139.
56. Freud, Sigmund. *The Aetiology of Hysteria in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. and trans. by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud*. 2001. London. Vintage. Vol. III, p.192.
57. See Burke, Janine. 2006.
58. As quoted in Burke, Janine. 2006. p. 136.
59. Published in 1855 within his *Les Chants Modernes*. Du Camp, Maxime. *Les Chants Modernes*. 1855. Paris. Michel Lévy Frères. pp.391-403.
60. Gautier, Theophile. *Du Beau Antique et du Beau Moderne* in *L'Envennement* August 8, 1848. Reprinted in *Souvenirs de theatre, d'art et de critique*. 1883. Paris. Charpentier. pp.197-204.

61. Walter Benjamin, "The Destructive Character," in Jennings, Michael W. (ed.) et al.(trans. Rodney Livingstone). *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2, part 2, 1931–1934*. 1999. Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. p.541.
62. Letter from Maxime du Camp in Constantinople to Gustave Flaubert, 14 July 1844. *Letters inédites à Gustave Flaubert*. 1978, Messina, Italy. EDAS, p.42; as translated in McCauley, Elizabeth A. *The Photographic Adventure of Maxime Du Camp in Perspectives on Photography* ed. Dave Oliphant and Thomas Zigal. 1982. Austin, Texas. The Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin. p. 19.
63. cf. Brown, Frederick. 2005, p. 218.
64. As quoted in *ibid*.
65. From the 'Souvenirs Littéraires' of Maxime du Camp; in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 26.
66. Baudelaire, Charles. *The Voyage, I in The Flowers of Evil*. Trans. William Aggeler. 1954. Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild.



Stop 1. *The Black Box and the Book of
Sekhmet.* Egypt, 1849–51

TABEAU D'ASSEMBLAGE
POUR LA CARTE TOPOGRAPHIQUE DE L'ÉGYPTE,
 en 47 Feuilles
ET POUR LA CARTE GÉOGRAPHIQUE
 en 5 Feuilles.
 GRAVÉ AU DÉPÔT GÉNÉRAL DE LA GUERRE,
 à l'Echelle de 1 Millimètre pour 2500 Mètres.
 PARIS.



[Thursday, 15th Nov 1849, 10am]

[Saturday, 8th Dec 1849, 5am]
 [Tuesday, 11th Dec 1849, sunset]

[Tuesday, 5th Feb 1850]

[Monday, 11th Feb 1850]

[Tuesday, 28th May 1850, -]

[Sunday, 24th March 1850, 9am]

...When we were two hours out from the coast of Egypt I went into the bow with the chief quarter-master and saw the seraglio of Abbas Pasha like a black dome on the blue of the Mediterranean. The sun was beating down on it. I had my first sight of the Orient through, or rather in, a glowing light that was like melted silver on the sea. Soon the shore became distinguishable, and the first thing we saw on land was a pair of camels led by their driver...

Gustave Flaubert to his mother, 17th November 1849.

Out from under his long blue robe the Nubian produced a small copper dish; he filled it with sand and sat down cross-legged beside the gunwale. I faced him.

He placed the palm of his right hand on the sand, drew a few crisscross lines in it, and speaking slowly, without raising his eyes, he said:

'Your spirit has no country, you sleep as soundly under a tent as in your own house; your heart is black, because those who dwell there are now in the trumpet of the angel, who will sound the Last Judgment; you expect to receive letters at Assuan, but there are none; you will get them only in Cairo; when you read them a great storm will arise in your breast and you will weep like a newborn babe; you will return to your country, where you were long ill; you will not stay there, for your feet itch as soon as you are at rest; you will do yet more travelling by dromedary (...) you will die a violent death in a hot country.'

Du Camp, Maxime, *Le Nil, Egypte, et Nubie*. [10th April 1850]

Flaubert's first impression on arrival in North Africa contains all the ingredients of their journey. Not only the received exotic ideas – camels, sun, and seraglio – but also the novelty they were bringing – i.e. the photographic camera. The first sight becoming “like melted silver” by effect of the sun reverberates in the calotype images that Du Camp was to produce – a process in which the camera fixed images on paper coated with silver iodide. And it is in that tension between the image fixed by silver and the preconceived ideas fixated in their mind through their readings that the journey unfolded. The impression of the continent from ashore that November 1848 gives

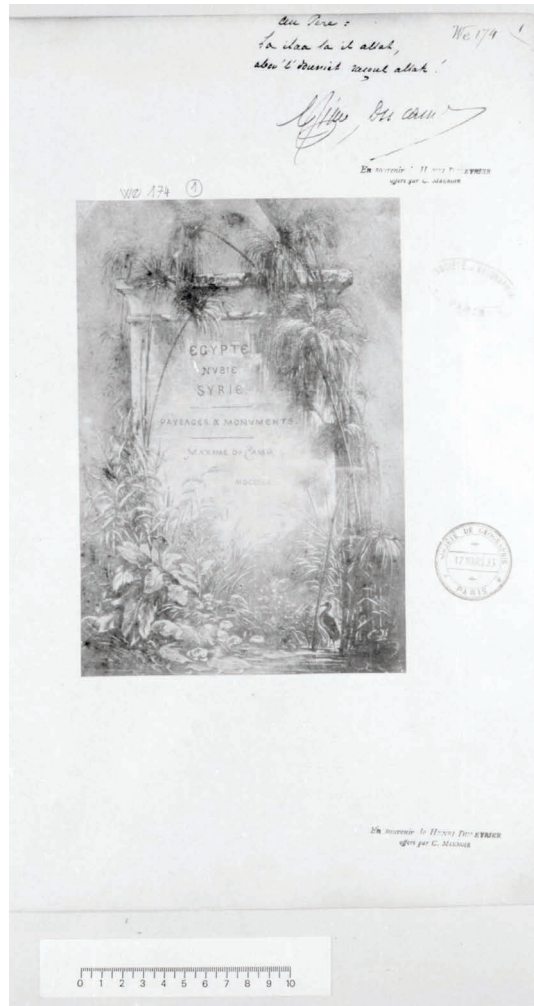


Fig. 1- Project for a frontispiece designed by Prisse d'Avennes, in Du Camp, Maxime, *We 174 n.1*. in [2 albums et 168 phot. du voyage en Egypte, en Nubie et en Syrie de Maxime Du Camp en 1849-1850, provenant de la bibliothèque d'Henri Duveyrier, don 1893]. 1849-1850. ©BnF Gallica

a point of departure for this stop. It will follow their steps looking at specific diary entries in chronological order. Du Camp's entry for 10th April 1850 – almost at the end of their sojourn – summarises the main questions of the chapter. In a nutshell, it contains questions of journey and home, construction of the past and foretelling of the future, vernacular knowledge and high technology, and, overall, the possibility of Du Camp becoming the Other. Questions that we will see unfolding during their journey.

Despite how wrong the Nubian clairvoyant on the boat got it – the letters were there waiting for him at Assuan, Du Camp didn't travel much outside Europe later in his life and he passed away peacefully at Baden-Baden¹ – the scene was impressed on the Frenchman's memory and, years after the premonition, he published the horoscope in his novel *Le Nil, Égypte, et Nubie*. The event was also full of the exotic mystique that attracted his readers in France. But, perhaps it was actually because of the familiarity of the event that the recount has its appeal. The Nubian *strego* was doing nothing but emulating the spirit of Occidental travellers in the desert: he had the knack for reading the sand. It's the same capacity that was enhanced by the writers of the *Description de l'Égypte*, the Comte de Volney, and Vivant Denon. The desert has prevalently been argued as a locus for writing. And it was so for Du Camp as well. From the memories of his journey he published a (semi-fictional) account of the journey written in the form of diary entries of a dead man – *Le Livre Posthume: Mémoires d'un suicidé* (1853) – the (slightly more accurate) travel memoirs as letters to a friend at home – *Le Nil, Égypte et Nubie* (first published in serial form in the literary journal *Revue de Paris*, beginning in October 1853²) – some of the poems included in his *Les Chants modernes* (1855)³ and, finally and most relevantly for us, what has been argued as the first ever travelogue that included its own photographs – *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie: dessins photographiques* (1852)⁴. Despite the aridity of the landscape, the almost two-year journey was a very productive one.

Du Camp also saw it as an opportunity for Flaubert to write.

“I urged him to write up the Greek portion of our journey; it could make a short, interesting book, excellent for a *début* in letters. He rejected my advice, saying that travel, like the humanities, should serve only to ‘enliven one’s style’, and that incidents gleaned abroad might be used in a novel, but not in a straight account. Travel writings were to him the same as news items, he said, a low form of literature, and he had higher aspirations.”⁵

In their travelling tent, lying down next to a sleeping Du Camp, Flaubert pondered how, “[h]e who writes and he who travels can be as distant from one another as a living man and a corpse, as in the autobiographical exercise which consists in holding one’s life as a dead thing. Between myself this evening and myself that evening, is the difference between a corpse and the surgeon who performs its autopsy.”⁶ The interest in the travelogue is, precisely, in the writer being simultaneously surgeon and corpse, archaeologist and mummy.

Though risking to miss the liveliness Flaubert demanded, their travel writings in Egypt are worth exploring, at a time when fascination with archaeology and exhumation was in its inception. Moving in the realm of death, their chronicle discloses the simultaneity between an exterior they were exploring and its internalisation. Du Camp and Flaubert have mostly been reviewed by criticising their colonial appropriation of Egypt as feminised body⁷. Its conception as corpse is missed from postcolonial critique. However, arguably their take on Egypt was an exploration of both the shrouds that covered it – the received ideas about the country⁸ – and the possibility of themselves being the internal organs – themselves becoming the African other. It will be a matter of understanding Flaubert’s fantasy: “Oh, how willingly I would give up all the women in the world to possess the mummy of Cleopatra!”⁹, as that, not a question of fetishised women, but a fetishised corpse. This chapter will explore the possibility of shifting the view of the travellers as colonial ‘lovers’ into mummy raiders of a sort. For that I will use the diary notes they didn’t publish in their lives,¹⁰ following them chronologically as the procedures of a surgeon’s autopsy, hoping

to cast new light on things that have escaped the colonial critique of their appropriation of Egypt.

[*Alexandria, Thursday, 15 November 1849, 10am*]

The desert begins at the very gates of Alexandria: first sandy hillocks covered here and there with palms, and then dunes that stretch on endlessly. From time to time you see on the horizon what looks like great stretches of water with trees reflected in them, and at their farthest limit, where they seem to touch the sky, a grey vapor that appears to be moving in a rush, like a train: that is the mirage, known to all, Arabs and Europeans – people familiar with the desert as well as those seeing it for the first time.

from Flaubert, letter to his mother, 23rd November 1849.

The greatest Flaubert is the one that treats the most Romantic and mysterious aspects with disdain. The Western canonical view of Oriental cities from ashore that captivated the eyes of Théophile Gautier¹¹, or later Le Corbusier's, is unnoticed by Flaubert¹²; Alexandria – the coastal gate to the country – only being mentioned by the desert that surrounds it. Furthermore, the mirage, the indescribable mind-blowing visual trick, is reduced to banality by its commonness for both foreigners and locals. An *épater le bourgeoisie* attitude pervades Flaubert's vision – as much as it did in the Paris of the Revolution. But while in France it was a question of scorn for politics, here it is arguably an attempt to overpass the Romanticist reading with which Egypt tended to be associated at that time.

That morning of the November 1849, on seeing Egypt for the first time, Flaubert and Du Camp knew they were not seeing it for the first time. To the 'Orientalist' reference books of Du Camp, a Romantic reading list had been added by Flaubert. Lord Byron, Victor Hugo, and the *Arabian Nights* formed the cultural glasses with which Flaubert was arriving at Alexandria. His lack of consideration, was a removal of the lenses. However, despite not treating the visual trick with that allure that it tends to generate, Flaubert did well to point out the ever-presence of the mirage. The whole of their almost two-year journey in the country is surrounded by the illusion of seeing.

Questions of revelations, the photographic camera, ophthalmia¹³ and clairvoyance, produced a tension between sight and delusion, a double vision of novelty and déjà vu.

In his letters, he insisted on the odd feeling of revisiting something already known:

“Anyone who is a little attentive *rediscovers* here much more than he discovers. The seeds of a thousand notions that one carried within oneself grow and become more definite, like so many refreshed memories. Thus, as soon as I landed at Alexandria, I saw before me, alive, the anatomy of the Egyptian sculptures: the high shoulders, long torso, thin legs, etc.”¹⁴

Here we see the embodiment of Egypt is not female, but a coming to life of the archaeological remains. Rather than the removal of the Occidental cultural linen cloth that wrapped the country, the visit supposed a *rediscovery* of the same cultural reading. However, the interest of Flaubert in sight – in being there and seeing for himself – shifted the interest from a cultural shroud generated by text into a visual one in which the priority is in seeing. Edward Said has pointed out the primacy of literature in Flaubert’s dealing with the Orient¹⁵. However, rather than writing, the journey of Flaubert and Du Camp reveals the desert as a locus of vision.

This is most obvious in Du Camp, who had acquired a calotype camera especially for the journey. In his argument, the oculus of the camera was to replace the inaccuracy of the human and cultural eye.

“In my prior travels, I had noticed that I lost precious time in drawing the monuments or views that I wanted to remember: I drew slowly and in an incorrect manner; furthermore, the notes I took to describe an edifice or landscape seemed confused to me when I reread them later, and I understood that I needed a precision instrument to bring back images that would allow me to make exact reconstructions (...) Therefore, I entered into an apprenticeship with a photographer...”¹⁶

The mechanical prevailed over the aesthetic in Du Camp. The camera was not, as read by Flaubert, on the seduction of light impressed on paper. The detached eye was a promise of objective precision. At least, that was the way it was argued by the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, that granted Du Camp the pass required for the country.¹⁷ “The assistance of this new companion[camera] (...) can give a particular character and great importance to the results of M. Du Camp’s trip (...) It is (...) not a question of charming our eyes by the seductive effects that light causes in the camera, but of faithfully and sequentially copying the texts claimed for sciences.”¹⁸ As has been argued by Ballerini¹⁹, Brown²⁰ and McCauley²¹, Du Camp’s claim for objectivity is hardly sustainable in his album. Nevertheless, his photoshoot implies a change of focus with regard to the past tradition of Europeans in Egypt. For Du Camp, it is as if Egypt needed the camera; and without Egypt the camera didn’t make much sense. Just two months after leaving the African country, Du Camp was to sell his camera in Beirut, never to shoot again²².

Though Flaubert insisted on the feeling of *rediscovering*, cancelling out Du Camp’s *dis*-covering – removal of the cultural veil – their emphasis on the visual challenged the previous narratives synthesised in the *Description de l’Egypte*. For two and a half months before embarking for the Nile, Flaubert and Du Camp stayed in Cairo and surroundings. Months of sightseeing without much shooting.

[Giza, Saturday, 8 December 1849, 5am]

'Abu-el-Houl (Father of Terror) (...) We stop before the Sphinx; it fixes us with a terrifying stare; Maxime is quite pale; I am afraid of becoming giddy, and try to control my emotion. We ride off madly at full speed among the stones (...) night falls.'

from Flaubert, Travel Notes, 7 December 1849.

[facing the Sphinx] 'Gustave gives a loud cry, and I remain pale with my legs trembling. It is one of the deepest emotions in my memory.'

from Du Camp, Travel Notes, 6 December 1849 (wrongly dated in the original, as it was 7 December 1849)

[about the Sphinx] 'No drawing that I have seen conveys a proper idea of it – best is an excellent photograph that Max has taken.'

from Flaubert, letter to Louis Bouilhet²³.

'Ascent of the Great Pyramid, the one to the right (Kheops). The stones, which at a distance of two hundred paces seem the size of paving-blocks, are in reality – the smallest of them – three feet high (...) the Arabs push and pull me; I am quickly exhausted, it is desperately tiring. I stop five or six times on the way up (...) Finally I reach the top.

The sun was rising just opposite; the whole valley of the Nile, bathed in mist, seemed to be a still white sea; and the desert behind us, with its hillocks of sand, another ocean, deep purple, its waves all petrified.(...) To sum up: three colors – immense green at my feet in the foreground; the sky pale red – worn vermilion; behind and to the right, a rolling expanse looking scorched and iridescent, with the minarets of Cairo, canges passing in the distance, clusters of palms.'
from Flaubert, Travel Notes, 8 December 1849.

Paradoxically, as some scholars have suggested, the land of exotic light became a turning point for Flaubert, shifting direction from the Romantic pre-Egyptian first version of *L'Education Sentimentale* 97

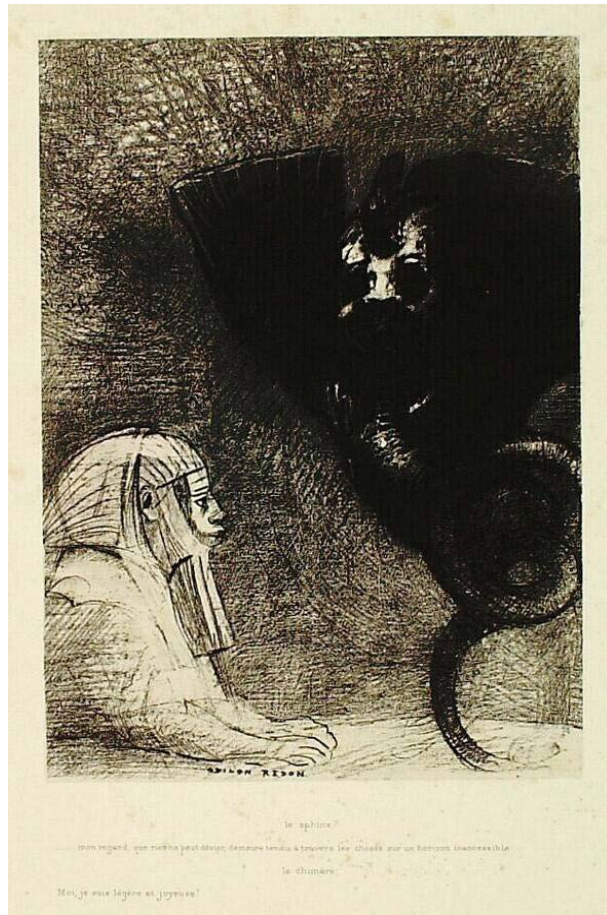


Fig. 2- Redon, Odilon, *Le sphinx: Mon regard que rien ne peut dévier, demeure tendu à travers les choses sur un horizon inaccessible. La chimère: Moi, je suis légère et joyeuse* [The sphinx: My gaze, which nothing can deflect, remains fixed across all things on an unreachable horizon. The chimera: I am full of lightness and joy] plate 5 from *To Gustave Flaubert*. 1889. ©Art Institute Chicago

and the two first versions of *La tentation de Saint Antoine*, to the Realism of *Madame Bovary*. Keeping a travel diary played a key role in the transition²⁴. A change of lenses of a sort, an adjustment in the way of seeing, happened during the journey. Though he didn't lose the Romantic echoes irrevocably – just a few days before dying, he confessed that “[f]or the past two weeks I have been gripped by the longing to see a palm-tree standing out against the blue sky, and to hear a stork clacking its beak at the top of a minaret”²⁵ – the rediscovering process of his journey supposed part of his literary shift. In his diary entries, two architectural objects condensed this change of perspective: the pyramid and the sphinx.

The latter is the object of fright. The emotional shake is immediate, direct. The reaction is evasion. This was his impressions on facing it on the 7th December 1849. Different, though complementary, is the vision of Flaubert's sphinx before traveling to Egypt. In his *La tentation de Saint Antoine* he had already explored the mysterious figure. In the last chapter, entitled 'Le Sphinx et le chimère', the desert animal appears as a motionless inquisitor. 'I reflect and I calculate', the Sphinx converses with the Chimera, '[t]he sea returns to its bed; the blades of corn balance themselves in the wind; the caravans pass; the dust flies off; the cities crumble; – but my glance, which nothing can turn aside, remains concentrated on the objects which cover an inaccessible horizon.' The Sphinx appears as reflective figure of the Romantic passing of time, being an enduring figure fixed in the desert. The objects she stares at successively pass by. The cyclical unfolding of time is impressed on her retina. In both instances the gaze of the sculpture is highlighted; however, if in the diaries she is daunting, she is contemplative of history in the pre-Egypt Flaubert.

After spending that night camping at its feet, Flaubert and Du Camp started the climb of the Great Pyramid at dawn. More evident of the disenchantment is the case of this architectural item. An early rise and the arduous climb didn't seem worth the vista. Crowning the top left only the impression of emptiness, a desert of 360 degrees. There he didn't find the prospectus of a country dotted with monuments 99

of antiquity – as the *Description de l’Egypt* introduced it. The first-hand experience was far detached from Flaubert’s envisions. Previous to the journey, his imaginary was the sublimity of simultaneously touching earth and sky at its top. Four years before, as a young Romantic, the Great Pyramid was a symbolic architectural device for the Oriental sojourner. “When the traveler has reached the top of the pyramid,” Flaubert wrote in the first *L’Education Sentimentale* (1843-45),

“(…)he is surrounded by the desert and devoured by the light, and the harsh air burns his lungs (...) he sinks down half dead on the stone, amidst the carcasses of birds that come there to die. But lift your head! Look! Look! And you will see cities with domes of gold and minarets of porcelain, palaces of lava built on plinths of alabaster, marble-rimmed pools where sultanas come to bathe their bodies at the hour when the moon makes bluer the shadow of the groves and more limpid the silvery water of the fountains. Open your eyes! Open your eyes! Those arid mountains hide green valleys in their flanks, there are love songs in those bamboo huts, and in those old tombs sleep the still-crowned kings of olden times (...) the forests grow vaster, the sea wider, the horizon more distant, touching the sky and becoming one with it. Look! (...) look, O traveler! O thinker! And your thirst will be appeased, and all your soul go out toward the light and soar in the infinite.”

That expectation for satiety left him rather thirsty after the climb. No redemptive view awaited for him on the actual visit. The colourful tableau was desaturated in just “three colors”.

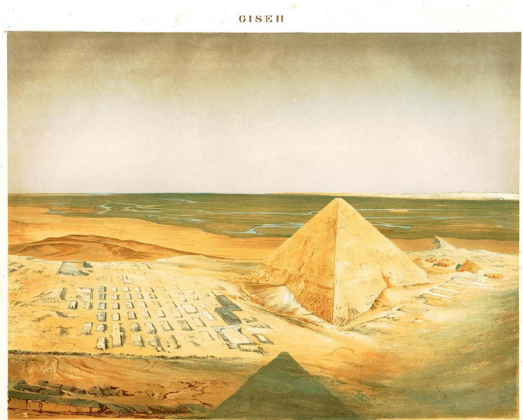
This entry in the diary of Flaubert is relevant as, to a certain degree, it challenges the gnoseological standpoint of the colonial project. Literally a point on which to stand, the panorama from the tip of the pyramid synthesises the annexation of Egypt to France through knowledge. The vista is the index of its wide-range study. The pyramid, prior to the journey, was a visual device. The insistence of the writer is on sight – “Look! Look! (...) Open your eyes!” In fact, just seven years before the vision from the top was blurred for Flaubert, the Prussian Karl Richard Lepsius stood on top of the

same stones. He was then leading an expedition of archaeologists, surveyors and draftsmen to Egypt very much inspired by the Napoleonic project²⁶. Fruit of the journey was the publication of the twelve-volume compendia *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* [Monuments from Egypt and Ethiopia] (1849-58). Among its 900 plates, one synthesises this understanding of the Great Pyramid (Fig. 3). It is a panoramic view from the top of the pyramid, divided in four parts following the cardinal points. The original of the perspective is a roll-up drawing, measuring some 43,5cm by 229cm. Drawn by the architect Joseph Bonomi the Younger²⁷, the printed version composes a depiction of the all-direction sweeping eye over the country. A wide vision that replicates the encyclopaedic layering of the frontispiece for the *Description de l’Égypte* (Fig. 14, *Opening Scene*). The view of the monuments of Egypt unfolding next to the river Nile was an all-encompassing view, immortalised by the Prussian flag of Lepsius’s expedition celebrating the birthday of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV (Fig. 4). Though Bonomi’s panorama was from the second pyramid, it aligns with Flaubert’s viewing point²⁸. However, in Flaubert the colourful picture of the country loses its vividness. Through him the ‘*Fac-simile des monuments coloriés de L’Égypte*’ – as Panckoucke titled the image – decolorises, showing that the facsimile was neither ‘similar’ to how it was painted nor based on ‘facts’.

It is when dealing with the Sphinx that Flaubert sees more clearly the limits of the colonial vision. “No drawing that I have seen conveys a proper idea of it”, Flaubert wrote to Louis Bouilhet. The paper impressions of the European enterprises could not cope with the gaze of the *Abu-el-Houl* [*Father of Terror*]. But through it Flaubert shifted from one architectural device – pyramid – to the possibilities of the other – Sphinx. The sempiternal eye of the prostrate monster, as we will see, condenses a different vision of the country. A vision that only the new technology of the camera could mirror. “[B]est is an excellent photograph that Max has taken” (Fig.6), Flaubert concluded. Rather than a project in continuity with the *Description* or the *Denkmäler*, the *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie: dessins photographiques* (1852) that Du 101



Fig. 3, Bonomi the Younger, J.
*Panorama von der zweiten Pyramide
 Aethiopien* (184



Joseph. Four plates illustrating
 in *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und*
 (9-58).

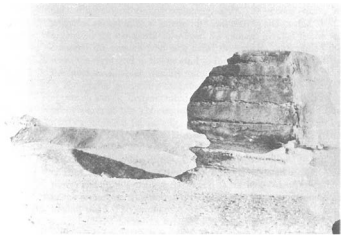
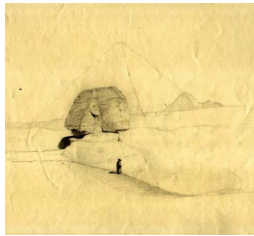


Fig. 4a- Original drawing of Frey, Johann Jacob, *Aufhissen der preussischen Fahne auf der Pyramide des Cheops unter Führung des Prof. Lepsius am 15-Oktober 1842*. ©Das Lepsius-Archiv am Altägyptischen Wörterbuch

Fig. 4b- Frey, Johann Jacob, *Die Teilnehmer der Preussischen Expedition auf der Spitze der Cheopspyramide. Kolorierter Stich nach einer Zeichnung von E. Weidenbach*. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung / Sandra Steiß

Fig. 5a- Original drawing of Frey, Johann Jacob, *Aufhissen der preussischen Fahne auf der Pyramide des Cheops unter Führung des Prof. Lepsius am 15- Oktober 1842*. ©Das Lepsius-Archi

Fig. 5b- Frey, Johann Jacob, *Die Teilnehmer der Preussischen Expedition auf der Spitze der Cheopspyramide. Kolorierter Stich nach einer Zeichnung von E. Weidenbach*. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung / Sandra Steiß

Fig. 5c- Du Camp, Maxime, 33. *Le Sphinx, vu de profil, 9 décembre 1849, c.n.x., albumen print from waxed paper negative*. From the Collection of the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris. © Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France.

Camp published upon their return conveyed a different perspective of the country.

“La vue du Sphinx a été un des voluptés les plus vertigineuses de ma vie,” Flaubert wrote, perhaps exaggerating the impression, “et si je ne me suis pas tué là, c’est que mon cheval ou Dieu ne l’ont pas positivement voulu. [The view of the Sphinx has been one of the most dizzying delights in my life, and if I didn’t kill myself there at the moment was because either my horse or God didn’t want it such.]”²⁹ After descending the pyramid, Flaubert took over his fears and encountered the gaze of the Sphinx face to face. “We sit on the sand smoking our pipes and staring at it. Its eyes still seem full of life (...) it exactly faces the rising sun, its head is grey, ears very large and protruding like a negro’s, its neck is eroded; (...) from the front it is seen in its entirety thanks to a great hollow dug in the sand; the fact that the nose is missing increases the flat, negroid effect. Besides, it was certainly Ethiopian; the lips are thick.”³⁰ A point that was already made by Vivant Denon³¹, and accentuated in his representation (Fig. 5d).

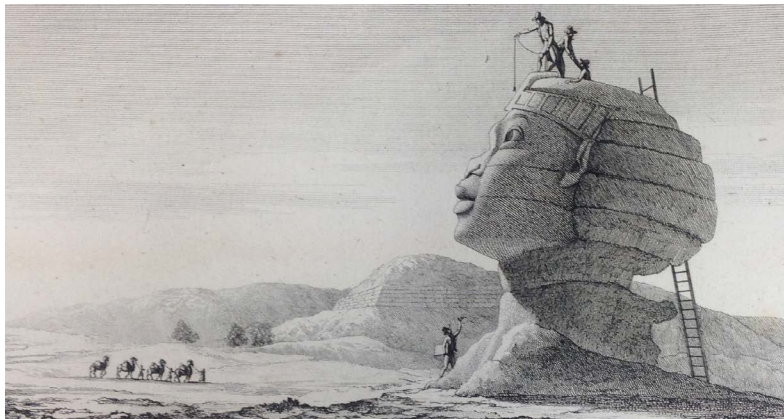


Fig. 5d- *Le Sphinx
près des Pyramides.*
In Vivant Denon,
Dominique.
*Voyage dans le
Base et le Haute
Egypte pendant les
campagnes du général
Bonaparte.* 1802.
©Sir John Soane
Museum

ÉGYPTE M



Marine Du Camp.



LE SPI

Imprimerie Photographique de

MOYENNE.



Gide & Baudry, Editeurs

FINX.

Reynard, Paris, n. 100.

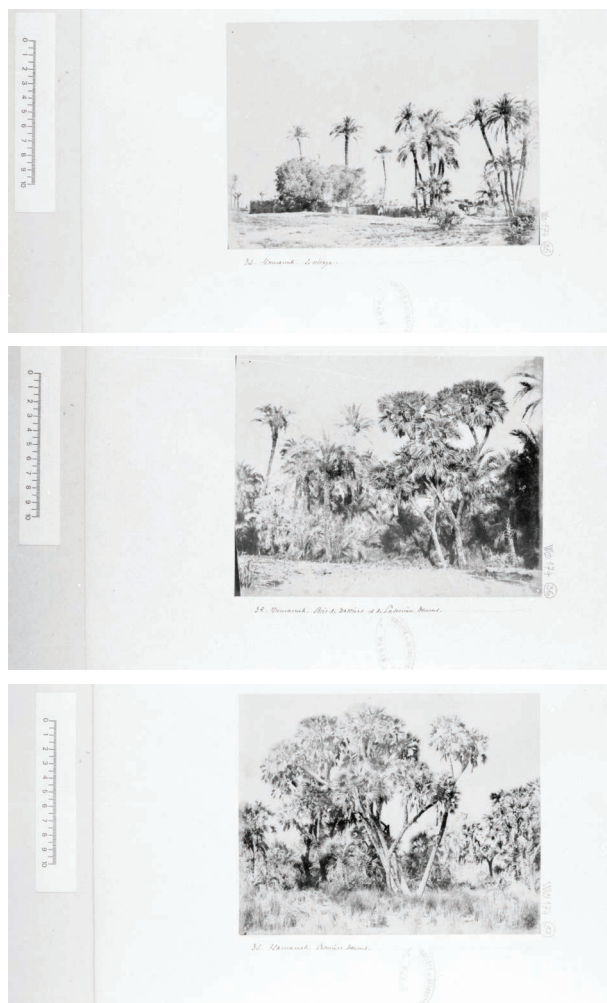


Fig 7- Du Camp, Maxime, Original images for plates 35-37 of *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie (...)* in [2 albums et 168 phot. du voyage en Égypte, en Nubie et en Syrie de Maxime Du Camp en 1849-1850, provenant de la bibliothèque d'Henri Duveyrier, don 1893]. 1849-1850. ©BnF Gallica

[Memphis, Tuesday, 11 December 1849, sunset]

(Walk at sunset in the palm groves: their shadow stretches over the green of the crops, as columns must once have cast their shadows over now vanished pavements. The palm – an architectural tree.) Everything in Egypt seems made for architecture – the planes of the fields, the vegetation, the human anatomy, the horizon lines.’
from Flaubert, Travel Notes, 11th December 1849

(previous page)
Fig. 6- Du Camp,
Maxime, *Le*
Sphinx in Egypte,
Nubie... © BnF
Gallica.

Walking at sunset in the palm groves, surrounded by the ruins of Memphis covered with sand was one of most banal Romantic stereotypes of Egypt; its identification with architecture, the dream of any XIXth century architect-come-to-be-archaeologist. However, beyond the literal equation palm tree = architecture = Egypt, Flaubert's "[e]verything in Egypt seems made for architecture" can arguably be understood as the main argument of their journey. For it, the photographs of Du Camp leave the traces of its logic. Two main features capture the architectural discussion: the ruins and the Nubian Man.

Du Camp did, in fact, shoot the conventional image Flaubert was talking about (Fig. 7). Nevertheless, his photographs are much fuller of sterile sand and buried ruins than sumptuous oasis. Flipping through the pages of *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie*, the reader has the feeling of a country in ruinous state. Furthermore, the contemporary critique to Du Camp's album is directed towards this process of edition of a view for the country. The excellent work of McCauley³² centres the research on the unpublished images of Du Camp. Despite a certain interest of the Frenchman photographer in the contemporary Egypt and its inhabitants³³, the photos were finally edited out – not certain if by Du Camp or by the editors. That way, the printed travelogue gave only the impression of "a dying country whose sight is slowly dimming³⁴", nothing of the contemporary but only ruins of its past. A line of thought that can be connected with the justification of the European nations 'saving' the country. That

line of critique – following post-structuralist notions of Orientalism – is based on focusing on the exclusions; on literally looking at what is excluded from Du Camp's frame. It implies, then, a continuity of Du Camp's project and the *Description* – as one of the greatest Orientalist works. However, looking at the interior of the frame also casts relevant light on other aspects that were left out of Du Camp's vision. If the critique on exclusion is to be taken further, and considered what Du Camp was excluding from the scope of the encyclopaedic *Description*, it can be observed that only ten of the original twenty-three volumes of the Napoleonic project were regarded. The focus of Du Camp is mainly on *Antiquités*. And not even the whole of the *Description's Antiquités*, with their speculative glorious state – as we have seen the project of the *Description* was impregnated – but the crude ruinous buildings covered with sand of contemporary Egypt. Considering it, there is a possibility of conceiving Du Camp as a discontinuity vis-à-vis the *Description*. One whose standpoint is not that of the tip of the pyramid, but the semi-buried gaze of the sphinx.

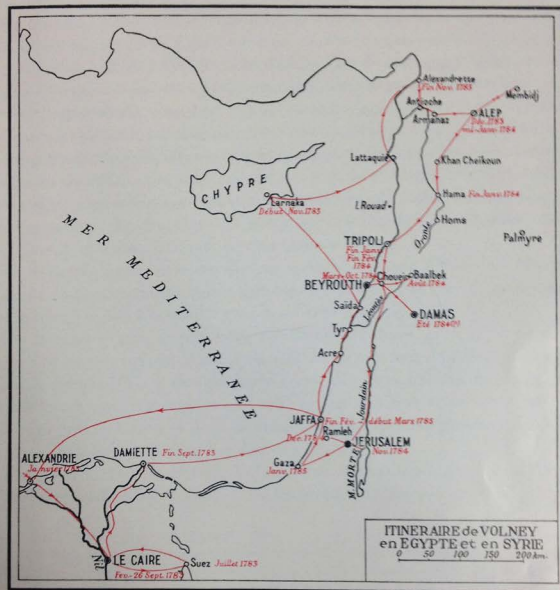
The ruins, rather than being what remains from the process of exclusion, can be seen as central framed concern. Oriental ruins as object of contemplation were popular since the beginning of the century through Comte de Volney's *Les Ruines* [*The Ruins*]. The book was fruit of a four years journey in the East. Previous to *The Ruins*, he had given an account of the journey in his *Travels in Egypt and Syria* (1787), which Napoleon's expedition used as guide-book in Egypt³⁵. Du Camp was reported reading Volney³⁶. The study of the book was a cure for the exaggerations of travellers; a correction to the traveller's tendency towards "bestow[ing] higher colouring on his pictures."³⁷ However, Volney's motto in the *Travels*, 'Multum mentitur qui multum vidit [who sees much, lies much]'³⁸, seems a bit paradoxical when the trip didn't take him to the depths of Nubia, but rather to the gates of the desert – not much farther south than Cairo – without entering it (Fig. 8). In fact, "Volney has nothing of the desert pioneer imagined by some biographers."³⁹ For Du Camp, *The Ruins* was more useful. A book whose subtitle 'ou Méditations sur les révolutions

des empires'[or, Meditations on the revolutions of empires] could connect with his concerns back in Paris. Seemingly worlds apart, these two elements – ruins and revolutions – are finely threaded in Volney's book. Professor Skilton analyses that connection through the notion of 'anticipating ruin' – Volney's book being one of the most influential works on a topic that was popular in the first half of the nineteenth-century⁴⁰. As the book goes, travelling in Syria during the year 1784, Volney immersed himself in the contemplation of the ruins of Palmyra. After a first reaction of mourning the glorious past fallen in decay, he moved into reflecting on the transposition of this condition for his contemporary Europe.

“[W]ho, said I to myself, can assure me, that their present desolation will not one day be the lot of our country? Who knows but that hereafter, some traveller like myself will sit down upon the banks of the Seine, the Thames, or the Zuyder sea, where now, in the tumult of enjoyment, the heart and the eyes are too slow to take in the multitude of sensations; who knows but he will sit down solitary, amid silent ruins, and weep a people inurned, and their greatness changed into an empty name?”⁴¹

On using the ruins as element that bridges epochs – linking present and distant past – he followed the tradition of the stones as *memento mori*. However, his time-bridge is more complex than simply connecting two poles. Looking at the opening lines of the text – “In the eleventh year of the reign of Abd-ul Hamid (...); when the Noggin Tartars were driven from the Crimea, and a Mussulman prince, of the blood of Gengis Khan, became the vassal and *guard* of a woman, a Christian, and a queen, I journeyed (...)”⁴² – the Occidental reader is intentionally displaced in time to a non-familiar moment in history, which is in fact 1784⁴³. That dislocation of time starts triggering a dislocation of space: Palmyra, Paris, London, Amsterdam. It is only ironical that, as has been proved⁴⁴, Volney didn't even visit Palmyra himself. A strategy that moves the ruins into an object for discussing the present rather than the past; a use of the ruins as a way of seeing

ITINÉRAIRE DE VOLNEY
EN EGYPTÉ ET EN SYRIE



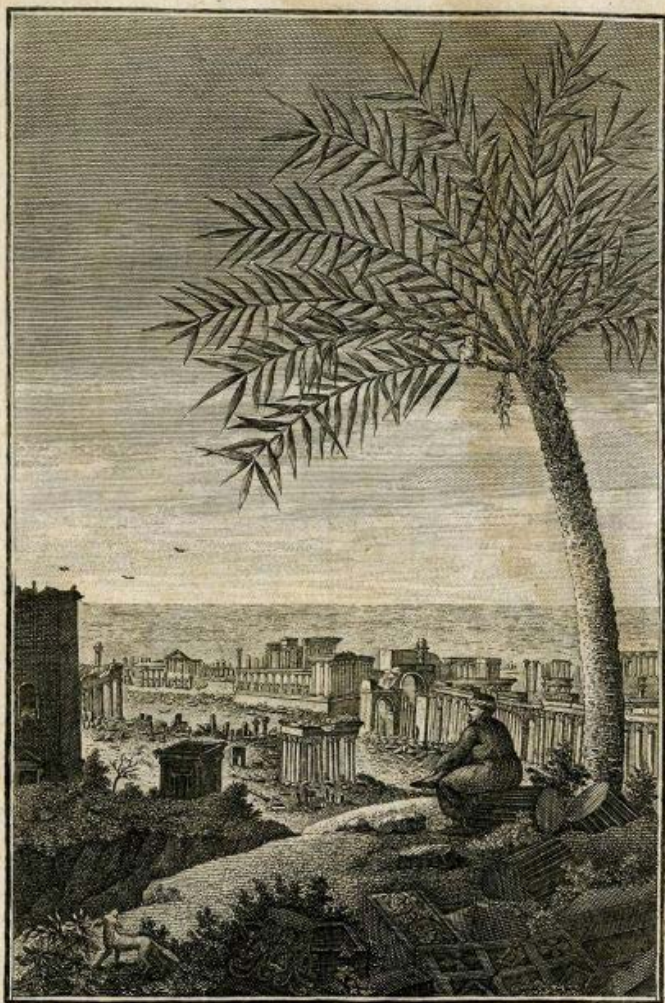
Arrivée à Alexandrie, janvier 1783 ; séjour au Caire, janvier - 26 sept. 1783.
Damiette-Alexandrette, par les Echelles, fin sept. - fin nov. 1783.
Séjour à Alep, décembre 1783 - mi janvier 1784.
Alep-Tripoli, 15-30 janvier 1784 ; séjour à Tripoli, février 1784.
Séjour à Mar-Hanna de Choueir, mars-octobre 1784.
Séjour à Jerusalem, novembre 1784 ; à Gaza, janvier 1785.
Embarquement, pour retour, à Jaffa, fin février - début mars 1785.

Fig. 8- Gaulmier, Jean. *Note sur l'itinéraire de Volney en Égypte et en Syrie* in BEO, no13, 1949-1851.

“recent changes in a longer view.”⁴⁵ Volney’s first edition in 1791 – between his journey and the publication, the French Revolution (1789) took place – became “a best-seller throughout the revolutionary period.”⁴⁶ Du Camp’s ruins, published in the post-1848 revolution, can be understood as landing in a similar context. A form of discussing a Paris that threatened becoming a *Maison Démolie*⁴⁷. A parallel between Du Camp in Egypt and Du Camp in Paris is operated through the ruins of his album.

As Skilton explains, the ‘anticipatory ruinism’ was used as strategy for inheriting a cultural past. His research focuses on the popularity of the ruins for the British Empire, in which a process of mirroring Imperial Rome took place. In the case of France, despite the anticipatory ruins being a harbinger of destruction, they were a subtler way of internalisation. One through which Occidental culture was negotiating its origins. Volney’s Palmyra kept the Roman genealogy. Maxime du Camp could be considered more daring, moving them from Greece into the Egyptian past.

To understand this, we have to look at the ruins along with the second feature of Du Camp’s photographs: the Nubian man. If Volney engraved his point of view as the main character of the veduta (Fig. 9), someone else occupies that position in Du Camp’s shoots.



Ici fleurit jadis une Ville opulente, ici fut le siege d'un Empire puissant. Om' ces lieux maintenant si deserts, jadis une multitude vivante amait leur enceinte &c.

Chapitre II.

LES RUINES,

O U

MÉDITATION

SUR LES RÉVOLUTIONS DES EMPIRES;

P A R V O L N E Y.

J'IRAI vivre dans la solitude parmi les ruines; j'interrogerai les monumens anciens sur la sagesse des tems passés. . . Je demanderai à la cendre des législateurs par quels motifs s'élèvent et s'abaissent les empires; de quelles causes naissent la prospérité et les malheurs des nations; sur quels principes enfin doivent s'établir la paix des sociétés et le bonheur des hommes. *Chap. IV, pag. 24.*

TROISIÈME ÉDITION

Corrigée, et augmentée du *Catéchisme du Citoyen Français*, par le même auteur.

A P A R I S,

Chez A. J. DUGOUR et DURAND, Libraires,
Rue et Hôtel Serpente.

A N V I I.

1799



THÈBES.



Maxime Du Camp



Maxime Du Camp, 1852

KARNAK.

PROPYLÉE DU TEMPLE DE KHONS.

Revue Photographique de l'Égypte et de la Nubie, 1852.

Pl. 17.

Fig. 10- Du Camp, Maxime, Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...1852. Plate 27. ©BnF Gallica

[On the cange, Tuesday, 5 February 1850]

“Hadji Ismael. Of all the sailors he was the one I liked best. He was very sweet-natured, with an ugly face, one-eyed, superb muscles. He posed perfectly: I always used him as a model, to establish the scale in my picture. (...) He was rather slack and easily discouraged. He was a Nubian.”

from Maxime du Camp, *The Crew of the Cange*.

“Every time I visited a monument I had my photographic apparatus carried along and took with me one of my sailors, Hadji Ismael, an extremely handsome (‘well built’) Nubian, whom I had climb up on to the ruins which I wanted to photograph. In this way I was always able to include a uniform scale of proportions. The great difficulty was to get Hadji Ismael to stand perfectly motionless while I performed my operations; and I finally succeeded by means of a trick whose success will convey the depth of naiveté of these poor Arabs. I told him that the brass tube of the lens jutting from the camera was a cannon, which would vomit a hail of shot if he had the misfortune to move – a story which immobilized him completely, as can be seen from my plates.’ The day I was returning from Dendera I overheard the following conversation between him and Raïs Ibrahim – a curious account of a photographic expedition:

‘Well, Hadji Ismael, what news?’ asked the raïs as we boarded the cange.

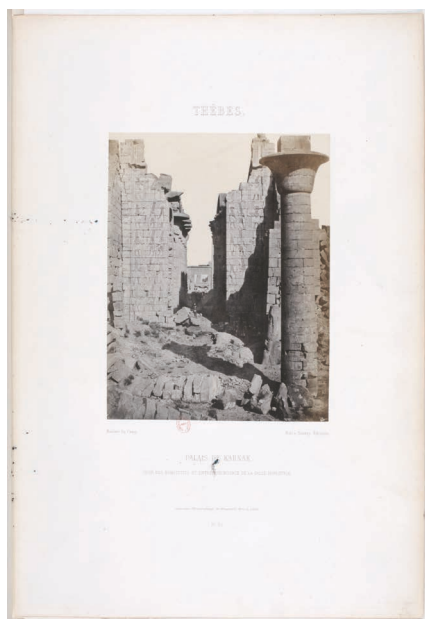
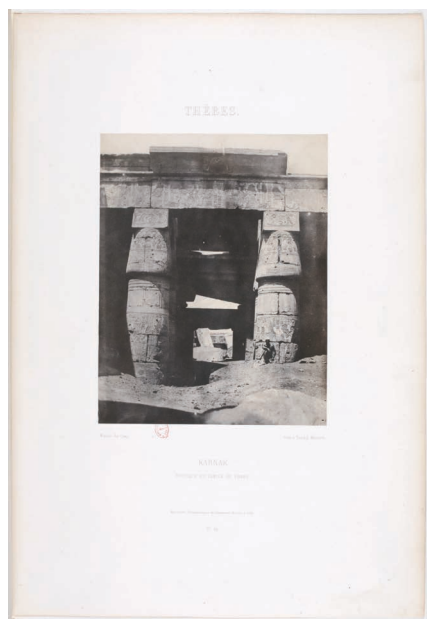
‘None,’ the sailor answered. ‘The Father of Thinness (‘Abu Muknaf’ as I was always called by my crew) ordered me to climb up on a column that bore the huge face of an idol; he wrapped his head in the black veil, he turned his yellow cannon towards me, then he cried: “Do not move!” The cannon looked at me with its little shining eye, but I kept very still, and it did not kill me.’

‘God is the greatest,’ said Raïs Ibrahim, sententiously. ‘And our Lord Mohammed is his prophet,’ replied Hadji.”
Maxime du Camp, *Le Nil, Egypte, et Nubie*.

On the 5th of February, 1850, Du Camp and Flaubert finally started their journey on the Nile. On board the *cange* – a small sailing boat traditionally used for navigating the Nile – Du Camp started a new

(previous page)
Fig. 9- Volney,
Constantin
François, *Les
Ruines, ou
Méditation sur
les révolutions
des empires*. 3rd
edition Paris-
A.J. Dugour
et Durand,
1798.

(following page)
Fig. 11a- Du
Camp, Maxime,
Égypte, Nubie,
Palestine et
Syrie...1852.
Plates 29, 37, 56,
105, 109. ©BnF
Gallica





XVI
C. 1890. 10

HUTS.



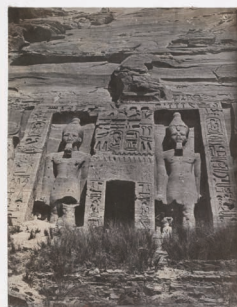
HUTS.

REPRESENTATION OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE.

REPRESENTATION OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE.

1890.

HUTS.



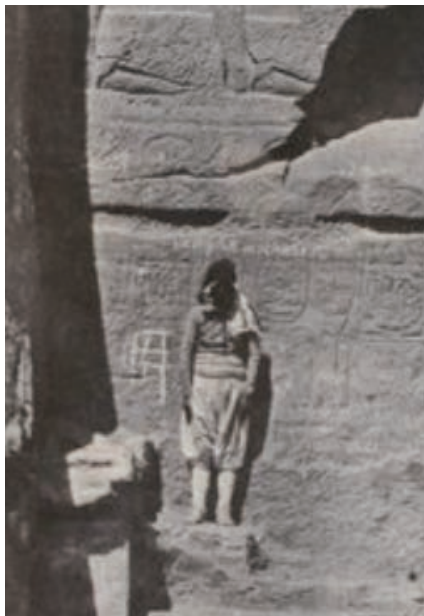
HUTS.

HUTS.

REPRESENTATION OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE.

REPRESENTATION OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE OF A HOUSE.

1890.







notebook entitled ‘Sur La Cange./Moyenne et Haute-Egypte’[On the cange./Middle and Upper Egypt/]⁴⁸, as they slipped their mooring from the Lower one. Flaubert, meanwhile, intended to write up the journey as a series of paragraphs forming short chapters entitled ‘The Cange’.⁴⁹ For Flaubert’s sensibility towards architecture, the boat might have caused a relevant impression, as it was on it they inhabited most of the journey⁵⁰. Nevertheless, his literary project proved not being very fruitful, as only a handful of paragraphs were the outcome. What did in fact cause a strong impression on his companion was one of the sailors, Hadji Ismael, who became an attribute to most of Du Camp’s photographs. Despite his “ugly face” and being “one-eyed”, Ismael was the model for scaling purposes. Sometimes being the centre of the perspective, others camouflaged in the shade, the viewer of the album regularly stumbles across the dark speck and the pale cloth in the midst of the ruins.

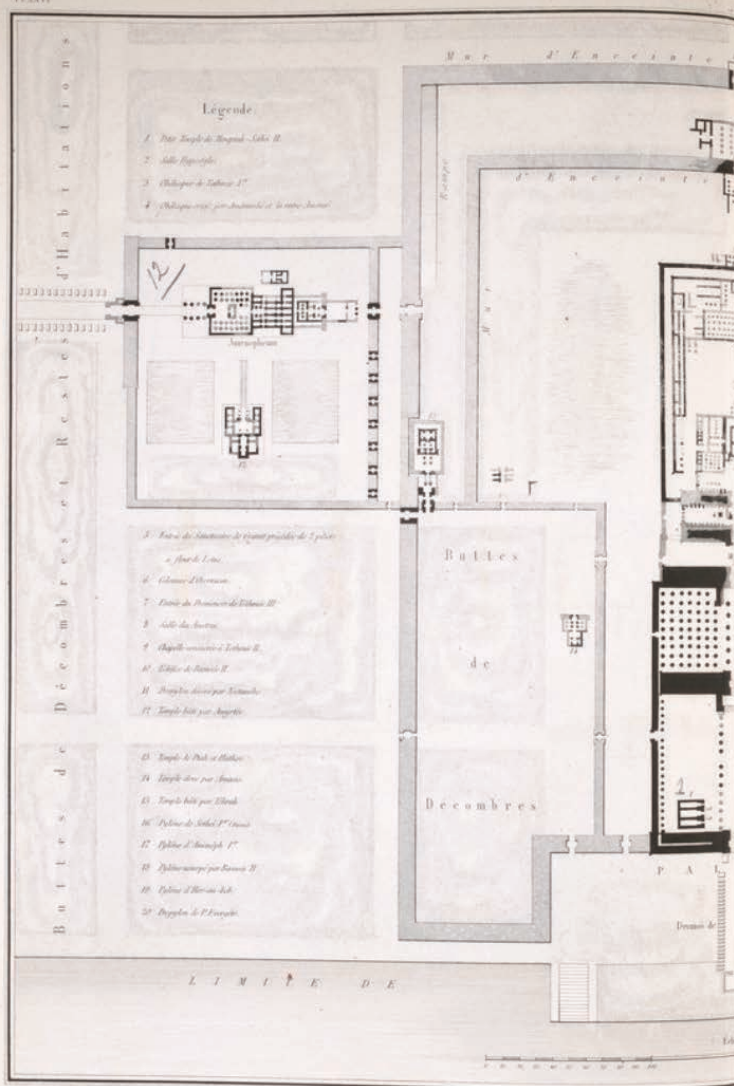
Obviously, through the description of his shooting process in *Le Nil*, the abusive utilisation of the native has generated a number of modern critiques. Ballerini’s main concern is, as her title indicates, ‘[t]he stillness of Hajj Ishmael’⁵¹; a research that analyses the uses and abuses of the Frenchman’s album. However, to measure the relationship between Du Camp and Ismael in terms of power is problematic. Ballerini points towards the problems in her concluding lines⁵². What is less thorough in her text is the relationship of Ismael with the ruins. Both her book and McCauley’s article remain at the level of understanding Ismael – as Du Camp indicates – as a tool for a uniform scale of proportions. In a literal understanding, this implies Ismael establishes relationships of size between photographs, enabling the photographer to measure and reconstruct the ruins. Du Camp never made use of the photographs like that. In fact, the only drawings that are included in the album are by the architect Émile Prisse d’Avennes (Fig. 12), who composed a series of plans – precisely the very element Du Camp’s photographs do not provide.

Rather than an inter-photograph unifier, the Nubian Man appears as *arche*, originator of the system of proportions that

govern Egyptian architecture. The Nubian Man can be perceived as a re-enactment of the Vitruvian Man. In fact, in past attempts for standard measurement, the need for tracing them back to an origin was imperative. This is the case, most notably, of the Abbé Laugier's primitive hut. As Anthony Vidler explains, the primitive hut was a question of origins, but along with it "[it] offered a criterion of judgement by which all subsequent inventions were to be measured."⁵³ Origins as a standard of proportions were closely read together. In the flat frontal photographs, the figure appears surrounded by the monument to which he serves as principle; the proportions of his human body giving order to the architecture. The photographs were published when the question of the origins of Architecture were again discussed, just a year after Gottfried Semper published his polemic on it, arguing for a re-tracing of the origins by the anthropological observations of ancient 'barbarians'. In the light of the German's celebrated inception, "[t]he first sign of settlement and rest after the hunt, the battle, and wandering in the desert is today, as when the first men lost paradise, the setting up of the fireplace and the lighting of the reviving, warming, and food preparing flame"⁵⁴, the Nubian figure appears as just 'unpacking' from his desert-wandering. A strange coming to terms of Semper's barbarism with the Classicist monumentality of Laugier. Or, in a very literal sense, the visual record of Flaubert's '*Everything in Egypt seems made for architecture*'. If Laugier's primitive hut retracing the origins can be interpreted in the light of the Enlightenment brought by the French Revolution⁵⁵, and Semper's expanding the origins to integrate pre-Classic forms of inhabitation⁵⁶, Du Camp's Nubian Man is to be considered in the light of the desert, of stepping out of traditional Grand Tour routes finding the origins of Western Architecture beyond Greece, into Egypt. In any case, it supposed the re-enactment of a tool for negotiating origins, by internalising Nubian architecture into the inception of Classic (European) Architecture.

(previous page)
 Fig. 11b- Du
 Camp, Maxime,
 Égypte, Nubie,
 Palestine et
 Syrie...1852.
 Plates 28, 32, 33,
 34, 43, 45, 48, 87,
 97, 108. ©BnF
 Gallica

(following page)
 Fig. 12- Prisse
 d'Avennes, Émile.
*Karnak. Plan
 Général des Ruines*
 in Du Camp,
 Maxime, Égypte,
 Nubie, Palestine
 et Syrie...1852.
 Plate XXVI*.
 Plate 27. ©BnF
 Gallica



Le plan de l'édifice principal est d'après les fouilles de M. de Sauter.



THÈBES.



Banc de l'ouest



Banc de l'est

MEDINET-HABOU.

PORTES DU SOUTHERN

Journal des Travaux de l'Égypte, 1852, p. 101.

Pl. 47.

Dupont

Fig. 13- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie*...1852.
Plate 47. ©BnF Gallica

[Between Saklara & Meidoun, Monday, 11 February 1850]

'...Golden clouds, like satin sofas. (...)the sun is setting in the desert. To the left, the Arabian chain with its indentations; it is flat on top, a plateau, in the foreground, palms, and this foreground is bathed in darkness; in the middle ground, beyond the palms, camels pass, and two or three Arabs riding donkeys. What silence! Not a sound. Two great strips of sand, and the sun! One sees how awesome it might be here. The Sphinx has something of the same effect.'

from Flaubert, 'Travel Notes, 11th February 1850

'The water of the Nile is quite yellow; it carries a good deal of soil. One might think of it as being weary of endlessly murmuring the same monotonous complaint that it has traveled so far. If the Niger and the Nile are but one and the same river, where does this water come from? What has it seen? Like the ocean, this river sends our thoughts back almost incalculable distances; then there is the eternal dream of Cleopatra, and the great memory of the sun, the golden sun of the Pharaohs. (...)

Dance of the sailors. (...)The boat heeling. The Nile in the middle of the landscape; and we in the middle of the Nile. (...)

Far away, on a river gentler and less ancient than this, I know a white house whose shutters are closed now that I am not there.'

from Flaubert, 'Travel Notes, 'The Cange', 6th February 1850

While it was unavoidable for Du Camp's photographic process to tie the *cange* up, Flaubert made of the vessel his space of description. The Sphinx's viewpoint of the camera was his notebook on-board. The river was their itinerary. The journey in Egypt was a travel programme articulated by the Nile. They saw a lot of sand, but mostly standing from the Nile. It was a route clearly delineated. But at the same time, being 'in the middle of the Nile' implied spatial and temporal dislocation. For Flaubert, the waters of the Egyptian river connected him with the Seine that bathed his home at Rouen. Du Camp remembered Flaubert under that spell of been-here-and-there. "I am not sure that when 127

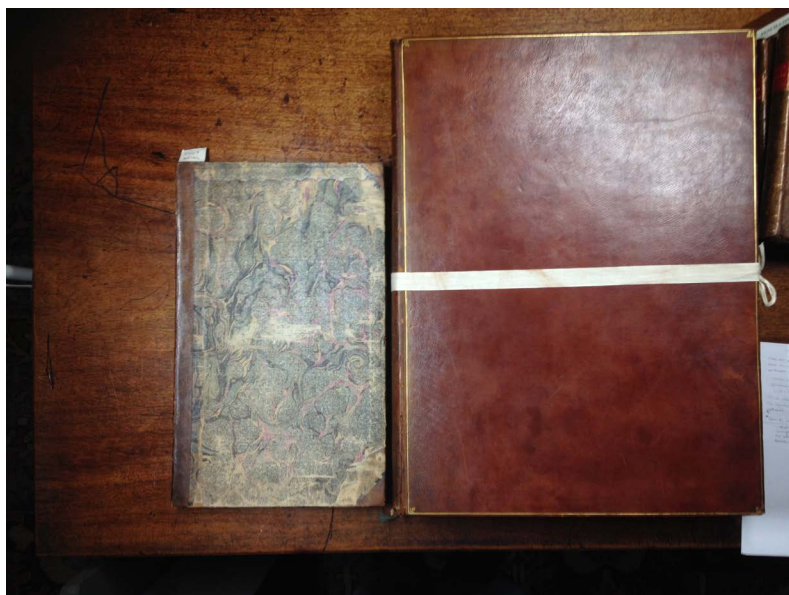


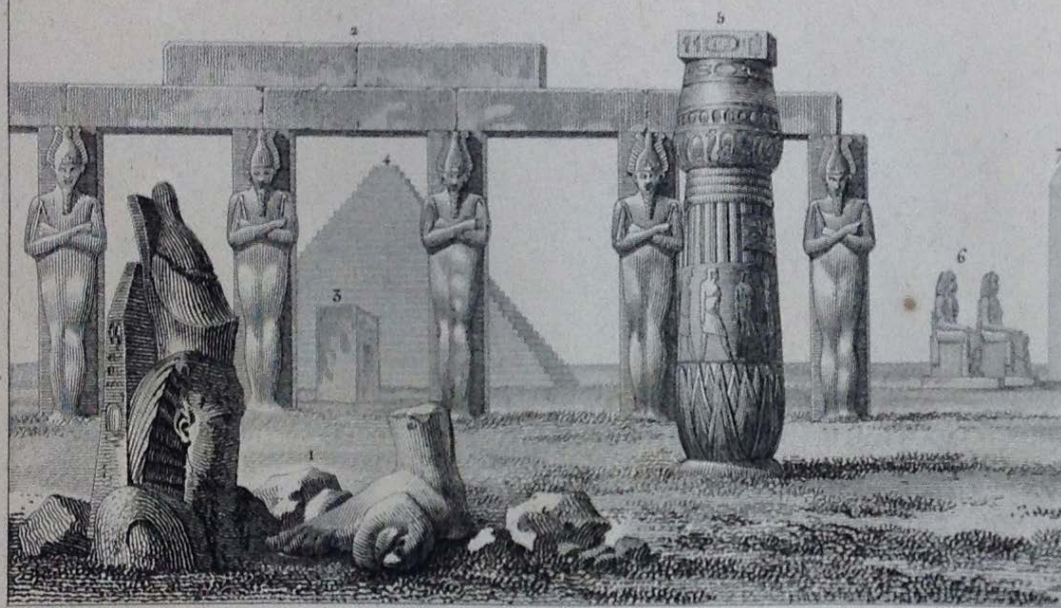
Fig. 14- Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*. (right) 1st Edition, 1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Ainé. (left) Edition, 1803. London. W. Bulmer & co. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

gazing on the island of Elephantine he did not sigh for the meadows of Sotteville, or long for the Seine when he saw the Nile.”⁵⁷ However, as well as in space, the river carried them back in time, to “the eternal dream of Cleopatra” and “the golden sun of the Pharaohs.” In fact, the seduction of moving towards the sources of the Nile made Du Camp articulate the narrative of his album following it, rather than sequencing the photos in the order they were actually taken.

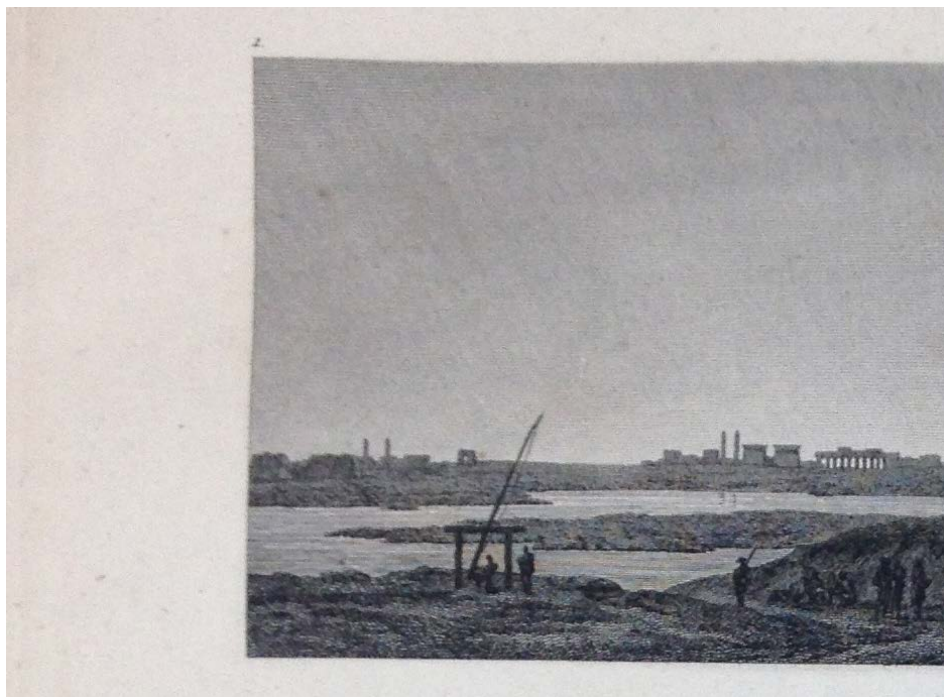
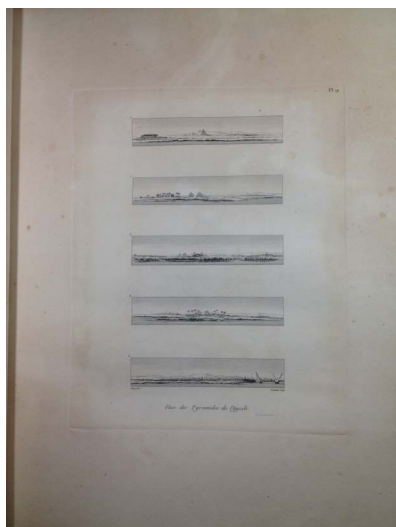
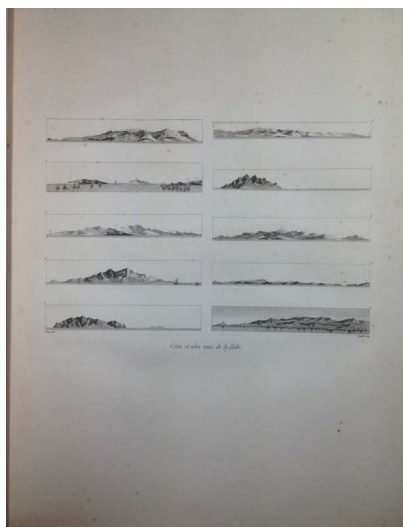
Égypte, Nubie (...) is organised around the river, departing from Cairo, moving upstream, stopping the volume with the jumps of the first cataract, and concluding the journey and the second volume of the album with their arrival at the second cataract. This is not the case of the actual journey they did. Sailing against the current and being dependent on the winds, Du Camp didn’t spend much time shooting on the way upstream. On arrival at the second cataract, reversing their way, the descent of the Nile was the part of the journey when most of the photos were taken⁵⁸. However, the sequencing of the album as a cruise-up-the-Nile articulated a project.

In the Egyptian works we have analysed so far, the journey was a key element of validation. ‘Travels’, ‘Voyage’, ‘Journey’, the word in the titles operated as a means of legitimisation. “I have been there” was the very licence to speak. The river was the media, sometimes appearing explicit, other times inferred. Dominique Vivant Denon participated in Napoleon’s expedition. His project – much more modest in scope – was published in 1802, anticipating the *Description*⁵⁹ – he even proposes a ‘Reunion de divers fragmens d’architecture Egyptienne’ [Gathering of diverse fragments of Egyptian architecture] in the line of what later will be the frontispiece of the Napoleonic work (Fig. 15). Many of his illustrations present panoramic views of and from the river (Fig. 16 & 17). The sequence of his text follows the river upstream, starting at Alexandria (even earlier, showing some islands of their journey from Toulon to North Africa), and concluding in Upper Egypt. A second edition made in London (Fig. 14) splits the text from the plates in two distinct volumes, as well as reducing the size of the publication. This

(following page)
 Fig. 15- ‘Reunion
 de divers fragmens
 d’architecture
 Egyptienne’ (plate
 61) in Vivant
 Denon, Dominique.
*Voyage dans le
 Base et le Haute
 Égypte pendant les
 campagnes du général
 Bonaparte*. 1802,
 Paris, P. Didot
 L’Ainé. ©Sir
 John Soane
 Museum.

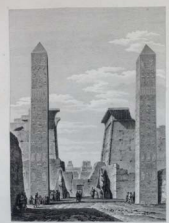








1. Vue de Babylone, du côté du grand canal. 2. Vue de Babylone. 3. Vue de Babylone, du côté du petit canal.

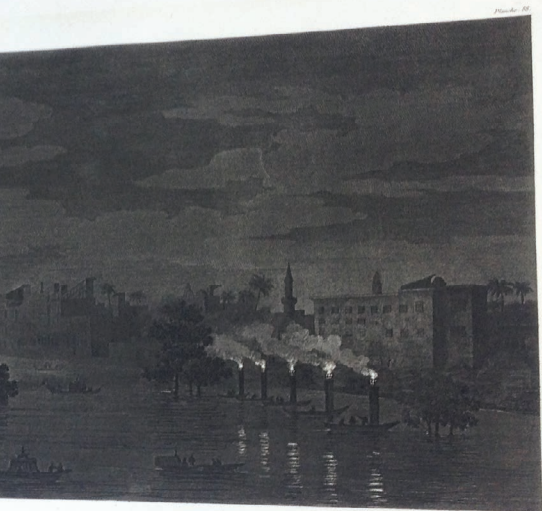


1. Vue de Babylone, du côté du grand canal. 2. Vue de Babylone, du côté du petit canal.





Vue du Caire prise de la place el-Askia pendant le temps de l'inondation



on du Nil

(previous page)Fig.
16- Series of plates
illustrating the
river Nile in Vivant
Denon, Dominique.
*Voyage dans le
Base et le Haute
Egypte pendant les
campagnes du général
Bonaparte.*1802,
Paris, P. Didot
L'Ainé. ©Sir
John Soane
Museum.

Fig. 17- 'View
of Cairo from
él-uzbékyéh during
flooding season of
the Nile' in Vivant
Denon, Dominique.
*Voyage dans le
Base et le Haute
Egypte pendant les
campagnes du général
Bonaparte.*1802,
Paris, P. Didot
L'Ainé. ©Sir
John Soane
Museum.

implied not only a decrease in the monumental presence of the work, but also brought a modification in the sequence, dissociating it from the river.



Fig. 18a- *Costumes Egyptiens* (plate 101) in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*. 1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Aîné. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 18b- plate 103 in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*. 1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Aîné. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Desynchronisation is finally completely reversed in the *Description de l'Égypte*. The Napoleonic narrative doesn't start with the arrival from the Mediterranean. Rather, the sequence in the encyclopaedic compendium, though broken up in the different volumes, has a consistency of opening at the shores of Elephantine, flowing downstream towards Cairo and Alexandria. An index that affirms that not only is the Ancient past relevant, but also its present, something that was not that clear in Denon's upstream volume, despite including some illustrations of local everyday-life scenes and some contemporary characters towards the end of the volume (Fig. 18). In Du Camp's case, geographically moving upstream implied periodising back in time. From the contemporary views of Cairo⁶⁰, the album moves backwards, deeper into Nubia. It seems symptomatic that Volume One of Du Camp stops at the point of reaching Elephantine, the furthestmost point in the Napoleonic *Description*. That point appears in Du Camp as 'a promised land'⁶¹. "Au delà de cette cataracte et de ce désert, c'est la Nubie. [Beyond this cataract and this desert, it is Nubia.]"⁶² However, the journey continues in Volume Two. If we look at the maps printed in Vivant Denon (Fig. 19a) and the *Description* (Fig. 19b), Nubia remains outside the frame. Du Camp's extension of the itinerary into Nubia is a voyage in an out-of-bounds territory. And he justifies the extension as a way of making up for the lack of previous references to monuments of which "les anciens historiens n'en parlent pas [ancient historians do not speak about.]"⁶³ It is 'a promised land', exterior to previous accounts; but also a means of pushing the periodisation further back in time – to a point of origin that was not previously considered. It is ironic that immediately after the series of photographs of Nubia, the reader is presented with the walls of Jerusalem, the actual Jewish promised land – where their photographic journey continued.

Whether promised land or not, Nubia was the land beyond the *Description*, the extra bit in the map to be added to its cartography (Fig. 19c). The final halt in their African journey which they saw as a land of revelation.

(following page)
Fig. 19a- *Carte de L'Égypte Inferieure*(plate 7) and *Carte de la Haute Égypte*(plate 140) in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Base et le Haute Égypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*.1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Ainé. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 19b- *Tableau d'Assemblage pour la Carte Topographique de L'Égypte* in *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. *Atlas Géographique*. Plate 1. © British Library.

Fig. 19c- *Itinerary of Maxime du Camp and Gustave Flaubert indicating the stops in this chapter, over Tableau d'Assemblage pour la Carte Topographique de L'Égypte*. Image by the author.



The map shows the Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea region. Key locations and events marked include:

- [Thursday, 15th Nov 1849, 10am]**: Located near the top of the map, near the coast of Egypt.
- [Saturday, 8th Dec 1849, 5am]**: Located near the coast of Egypt, south of the first event.
- [Tuesday, 11th Dec 1849, sunset]**: Located near the coast of Egypt, south of the second event.
- [Tuesday, 5th Feb 1850]**: Located near the coast of Egypt, south of the third event.
- [Monday, 11th Feb 1850]**: Located near the coast of Egypt, south of the fourth event.
- [Tuesday, 28th May 1850, 7pm]**: Located near the coast of Egypt, south of the fifth event.

The map also shows the Red Sea, the Nile River, and the Desert of Nubia. The title 'M E R M E D I T E R R E E' is at the top, and 'D E S E R T D E N U B I E' is at the bottom. The Red Sea is labeled 'M E R R O U G E'.

[Sunday, 24th March 1850, 9am]

[Gebel Abusir, Sunday, 24 March 1850, 9am]

I warn you seriously that my intelligence has greatly diminished. This worries me: I am not joking – I feel very empty, very flat, very sterile (...) just now it is best to be all eyes.”

from Flaubert, letter to Louis Bouilhet, 13 March 1850.

‘[Flaubert’s] future novel engrossed him. I am obsessed by it’, he would say to me. Amid African landscapes he dreamed of Norman landscapes. On the borders of Lower Nubia, on the summit of Gebel Abusir, which overlooks the second Cataract, as we were watching the Nile dash itself against the sharp black granite rocks, he gave a cry: ‘I have found it! Eureka! Eureka! I will call her Emma Bovary!’”

Maxime du Camp, *Souvenirs Littéraires*

The idea that one of the most emblematic protagonists of Realist novels was given birth to in the ‘Oriental’ journey seems a bit of made up biography. Especially thinking that Du Camp wrote this passage years after Flaubert’s death, arising great scepticism among the Flaubertistes. However, Flaubert’s literary thirst in Nubia did finally make way to satiety. This took place when he finally became “all eyes”. Though in the final stretch of the Nile before the cataract he was completely dry, empty. A sterility that gives even more vividness to the finding. At the outermost post of their journey, gazing at the horizon that they were not to access, Flaubert did actually receive a ‘revelation’, though not Emma’s one. As he noted it in his diary,

“I reached the foot of Gebel Abusir at nine, and fire a few rifle shots to call Maxime. From the distance a black rock, shining in the sun, gives the effect of a Nubian in a white

shirt on look-out, or of a white cloth hung out to dry. How can something black come to look white in this way? It happens when the sun strikes the edge of an angle. I have frequently observed the same effect (...)"⁶⁴

As Steegmuller asks himself, "Did Flaubert's observation of 'black coming to look white' owe something to Du Camp's negative?"⁶⁵ In the mood of 'being all eyes', it seems Du Camp's camera oculus potentially could have triggered the observation. Steegmuller's observation could be taken further, seeing Du Camp's photographs of ruins as a process of bringing to life the distant monuments of the Egyptian past. In that fashion, the collection of photographs would make Du Camp's album a re-enactment of the famous Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, this time taking the title in a more literal sense: *Book of Emerging Forth into the Light* – as the original hieroglyphic title would be more closely translated⁶⁶. The camera was a way of connecting with the Egyptian mythological mindset. If, for the Egyptian, death was about bringing into light, the modern reproducing process – using photosensitive chemicals – was also a way of bringing the ancient funerary back. With his camera, and his album full of ruins and sand, Du Camp's had become an actor in the ritual. He became a risen Sekhmet, goddess of healing, daughter of the sun god Ra. It is not surprising to find that the ancients believed the desert was formed from the breath of the goddess.

Perhaps it is a bit exaggerated to compare Du Camp with an Egyptian goddess. Nevertheless, in this outermost point of their journey, where the slow return to Paris only begun, it is also a moment of wondering whether Flaubert's 'black coming to look white' did only refer to the camera. As Ballerini hints at the end of her critique of Du Camp, the photographs themselves portray an ambiguous operation of black-becoming-white. Perhaps Du Camp resembled a more terrestrial figure. It is ultimately the Nubian Man that identifies with the photographer. He is the figure at the centre of each shot. Reminded by Du Camp, we know that Hadji Ismael is "one-eyed"⁶⁷, mirroring the monocular sight of the *camera obscura*. "Ishmael-

as-camera”, affirms Ballerini, “makes Du Camp an object-to-be-photographed as well as one who photographs.”⁶⁸ Ishmael as cyclops reverses his blackness into white, becoming the lens of Egypt. It is the Nubian man the object of the photographs but also the mirror of Du Camp looking through the viewfinder. A form of vision alternative to the Napoleonic tip-of-the-pyramid way of seeing the country. One that is not condensed in all-encompassing indexical images like the frontispiece of the *Description*, but rather composed of fragmented one-eye shoots excluding many elements outside. While this form-of-seeing is different to the imperialist one, it doesn’t mean it is not colonial. Rather it highlights a different way of appropriation. Black-becoming-white, Du Camp becoming the Nubian man is a subtler form of internalisation. A way which cannot be materially displaced to France as they did with the obelisk at Luxor, but that can be brought in the form of a photographic album. It is only symptomatic that days before Flaubert’s photographic revelations, he was pondering the convenience of the cyclops-sight: “just now it is best to be all eyes.” As opposed to the view from the pyramid or the displacement of the obelisk, the Sphinx’s gaze condenses better their lens in Egypt. The architectural object that observes and is observed. While the Sphinx never made its way to Paris, it is not surprising that years later Roland Barthes synthesises modern Paris in the Eiffel Tower, the “monument to be looked at and monument that looks.”⁶⁹

NUBIE.



Kasser du Camp

Soleil à l'horizon, 1852

IBSAMBOL.

statue assise en terre de sable

Statue assise en terre de sable

1852

Fig. 21- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie*...1852.
Plate 107. ©BnF Gallica

[Denderah, Tuesday, 28 May 1850]

Le temple de Denderah est semblable, quoique beaucoup plus grand, à celui d'Esneh. Sculptures d'une décadence extrême. On sent qu'on s'est uniquement rattaché à la tradition, et que le sens et la foi sont perdus.'
[The temple of Denderah is similar to that of Esneh, though much larger. Sculptures of extreme decadence. We feel one is only back in touch with tradition, but the meaning and faith are lost.]
from Du Camp, Travel Notes, 28th May.1850

Denderah, the late-style temple, paradoxically introduces the Nubian Man to the viewer for the first time in the album. Its photographs were actually almost the last ones to be taken in Egypt, on their downstream section of the trip – therefore it appears here as last in our chronological travelogue. One of them is the closest Du Camp's camera got to the Nubian Man (Fig. 22). The kouros presence of the Nubian gives proportion to the damaged columns, whose capitals are human heads. Under the parapet where he's standing, the mix of debris and sand accumulates around the temple. Yet the presence of the Nubian and his double in the camera give a strange feeling of time-lapse. A lapse that bridges the modern technology with the distant past. In his poem *La dicha*[Joy], Jorge Luis Borges wrote,

“He who embraces a woman is Adam. The woman is Eve.
Everything happens for the first time.(...)
He who watches a sand clock sees the dissolution of an empire.
He who plays with a knife foretells the death of Caesar.
He who sleeps is all men.
In the desert I saw the young Sphinx, that they just finished carving. There's nothing old under the sun.”

(following
page) Fig.
22- Du Camp,
Maxime, *Égypte,
Nubie, Palestine
et Syrie*...1852.
Plate 17. ©BnF
Gallica

HAUTE



Temple of Vespasius

GRAND TEMPLE

1974-1975

1974-1975

EGYPT.



Colonne de l'enclos.

LE DE DENDERAH

par J. B. B. B.

A suspended state that characterises the whole of *Égypte, Nubie* (...): a bridging of high-technology and origin. The Nubian and camera are brought together. The debris and the sand puts them in an ambiguous state. A condition in which it is not clear whether the stones are ruins or a construction site. A visual ambivalence that was already operated in some of Lepsius' plates (Fig. 23). There, a group of 'Nubians' drag a sphinx through the desert, not being certain whether they are constructing a temple or plundering the ruins. Only the figure of the artist drawing the action brings the viewer back to the present. Du Camp's photographic equipment got rid of the traditional archeologist art. Its absence enhances the doubt. From Egypt, Flaubert wrote in a letter,

Comment se sont accomplies la dispersion et l'extinction de ce peuple nombreux qui habita l'Égypte et la Nubie? Les hommes y sont rares maintenant, faibles, épuisés, presque agonisants; nul souvenir traditionnel ne leur est venu des époques passés. Lorsqu'on leur demande en montrant un temple: "Qui est-ce qui a construit cet édifice?" Ce sont les djinns, répondent-ils; la nuit ils y viennent encore. [How were the dispersal and extinction of this numerous people who inhabited Egypt and Nubia accomplished? Men are now rare, weak, exhausted, almost dying; no traditional memory has come to them from past ages. When asked to show a temple, "Who built this building?" "They are the jinns," they reply; at night they come again.]⁷⁰

Rather than the traditional approach of Architecture trying to decode the mysteries of Egyptian construction, the photographs of Du Camp put the viewer in a strange construction site, both distant in the past and contemporary in its technology. Produced just before the systematic removal of sand and debris around the ruins, Du Camp's album gives an alternative vision to mainstream Egyptology. The desert from which the ruins emerged was still remaining. A time in which decrypting figurative hieroglyphs was a priority to give meaning to the ruins, the photographs portray a fascination with the meaning

of the Nubian figure as such. A complete reversal of the Napoleonic sight. In his journey Volney pondered,

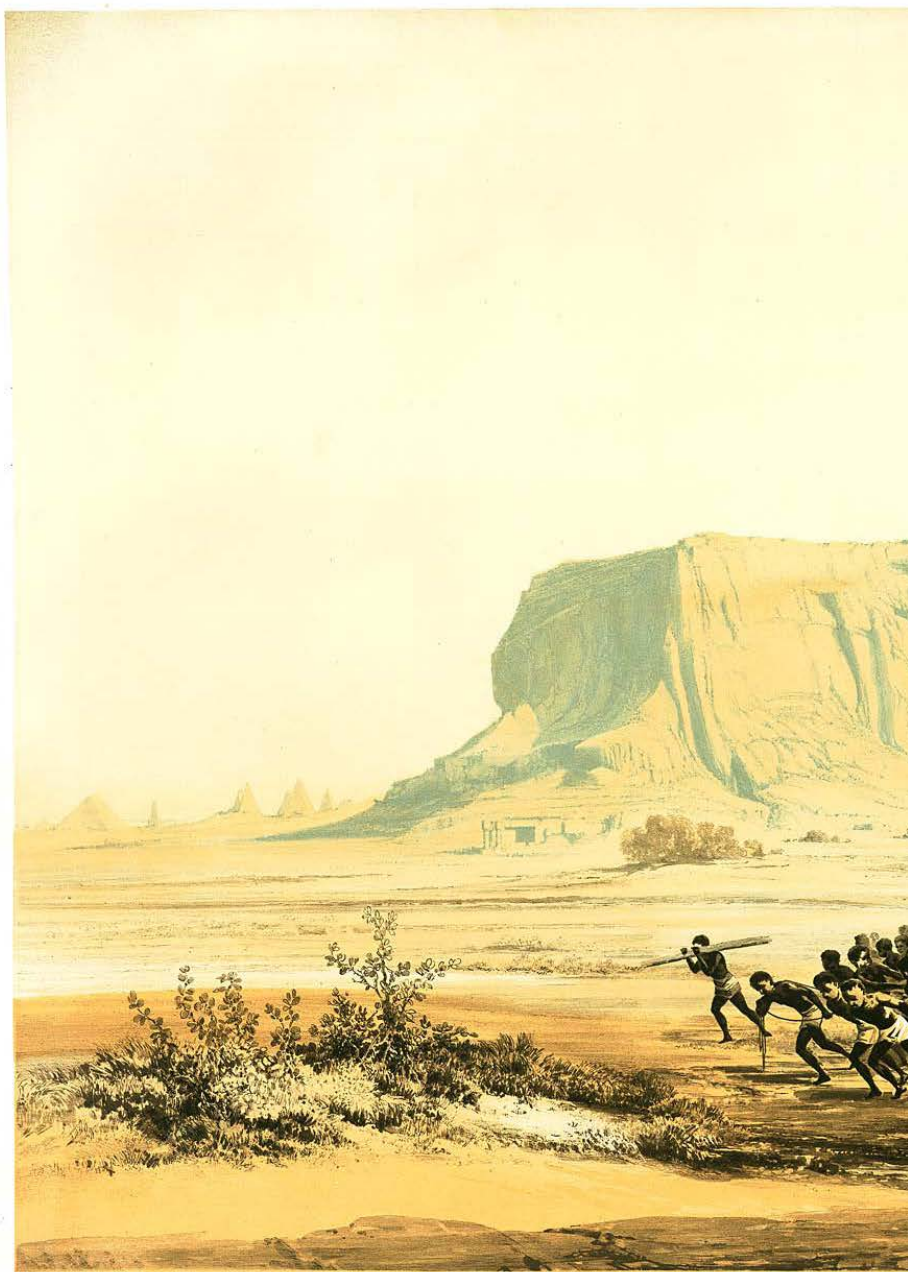
“In Europe, and especially in its more civilised and improved countries, where we have no examples of wandering people, we can scarcely conceive what can induce man to adopt a mode of life so repugnant to our ideas. We even conceive with difficulty what a desert is, or how it is possible for a country to have inhabitants, if it be barren, or why it is not better peopled, if it is susceptible of cultivation. I have been perplexed myself with these difficulties, as well as others; for which reasons, I shall dwell more circumstantially on the facts which will furnish us with their explanation.”⁷¹

Photography moved away from this lack of meaning of the desert and its inhabitants, decrypting them into Du Camp’s identification with the Nubian Man.

“I was born a traveler, active and lean;
My feet are curved and parched like a Bedouin’s;
My hair is frizzy like that of a negro,
And my eyes undaunted by any sun.”⁷²

If Architecture made an effort for internalising Egyptian buildings at its origins, its outcome was merely in the form of Revivalism⁷³. Du Camp’s album offers an alternative. Rather than absorbing the system of monumental proportions, the album enhances the possibility of internalising the Nubian Man as such. A question, as we will see in the following chapter, that prioritises the internalising mechanism in the form of self-portrait.

(following page)
Fig. 23- *View from the mountain Barkal* in Lepsius, Karl R. *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien nach den eichnungen...*1849. Berlin. Nicolaische Buchhandlung. Vol. 1. Plate 126. ©British Library.



Des. v. H. Wiedemann

Fachende

Ansicht von



v. Meyer

Lith. v. Seidel

Berg Barkal.

Abth. I. Bl. 126.

Endnotes

1. Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 148.
2. cf. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. xv.
3. For example, the poem *Avatars*.
4. To these three books we should add that the journey was also instrumental for other volumes throughout his life such as essays, novels, art reviews, short stories, literary criticism and memoirs. cf. cf. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. xiv.
5. Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 8.
6. Flaubert, Gustave. *Voyage en Égypte*, ed. Pierre-Marc de Biasi. 1991. Paris, Bernard Grasset. p. 125.
7. Mainly focusing on the lubricious passages of their diaries and letters and how that appeared in their later writings.
8. In later years, Flaubert started collecting a series of received/accepted ideas, platitudes that circulated in the society of his time. The use of clichés would be the centre of his satirical critique towards bourgeoisie. The unfinished work was published posthumously as *Le Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (1911-13). Already in 1852, just returned from the journey, Flaubert was writing to Louise Colet telling her about a project for a similar book. After reading it “one would be afraid to talk, for fear of using one of the phrases in it.” (Flaubert to Louise Colet, 17th December 1852)
9. Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 11. Fantasies that he writes about before arrival in Egypt.
10. Du Camp’s diary can be found in *Manuscripts et papers inédites*. Paris. Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France. Dossier ms.3721. Their transcript can be found in Du Camp, Maxime, *Maxime du Camp: Voyage en Orient (1849-51)*. Ed. Giovanni Bonaccorso. 1972. Messina, Italy. Peloritana.
- Flaubert’s *Carnets de Voyages* at the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris have never been fully published. Versions of it can be found in Flaubert, Gustave, *Égypte, 1849-51 in Oeuvres Complètes de Gustave Flaubert, Notes de Voyages, I*. 1910. Paris, Louis Conard, Libraire-Editeur. Also, translated in English, some notes can be found in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972.
11. Gautier, Théophile, *Voyage pittoresque en Algérie*, ed. Madeleine Cottin. 1845. Reprint 1973. Geneva. Librairie Droz. pp. 179-80.
12. His impressions of the city are mostly focused on the clothing of the locals, rather than on the classic perspective/description from ashore. See *Flaubert to his mother, Alexandria, 17 November 1849*, in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 28-30.
13. *Granular ophthalmia* or *desert ophthalmia* is a gradual eye infection capable of causing blindness. It is associated with desert climates. During his first days in Egypt, Flaubert wrote to his mother to calm her, reassuring her that “[a]s for ophthalmia, of the peo-

ple one sees only the very lowest orders (as the expression goes) suffer from it. (...) Don't worry, I will come back in good shape." (Flaubert to his mother, Alexandria, 17 November 1849) in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 30.

14. *Flaubert to Dr. Jules Cloquet, Cairo, 15 January 1850*, in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 81.

15. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 1987. London. Penguin Books Ltd. p.157. For Said, this is actually the case not only for Flaubert but for the majority of authors Said discussed in his book. For example, Disraeli, Mark Twain, Kinglike, Scott, Hugo and Goethe.

16. Du Camp, Maxime. *Souvenirs littéraires. vol. 1*. 1882-83. Paris. Hachette. pp. 421-22.

17. They were securing their stay in the country by becoming *chargé de mission scientifique en Orient* [officer for the scientific mission in the Orient] by the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres – Du Camp – and instructed officer to the Ministry of Commerce – Flaubert.

18. Bibliothèque de l'Institut, M.S. 3720 in McCauley, Elizabeth A, 1982. p. 24.

19. Ballerini, Julia. 2010.

20. Brown, Kathryn. *Egyptian Voyages: Gustave Flaubert, Maxime Du Camp, and Fouad Elkoury in History of Photography*. 2014, Vol. 38, part 2, pp. 161-172.

21. McCauley, Elizabeth A, 1982.

22. cf. *ibid.*, p. 44. Du Camp traded his camera with a "frenetic amateur" who gave him ten feet of gold-embroidered fabric, which Flaubert hoped would make a "sofa fit for kings." McCauley explains how the selling of the camera was due to technical problems he started to face for producing negatives in Beirut.

23. In Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 50.

24. cf. Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 48.

25. Steegmuller discusses both the turn from Romantic to Realist and the perdurance, episodically, of Egyptian landscapes in Flaubert. cf. *Editor's Epilogue* in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 214-222.

26. Peck, William H. *Lepsius, Karl Richard* in Redford, Donald B. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, Volume 2*. 2001. Oxford University Press. pp. 289–290.

27. See Beinlich, Horst. *Mit Richard Lepsius auf die Cheops-Pyramide: Studien zu den Ritualszenen altägyptischer Tempel*. 2010. Dettelbach, Verlag J.H. Röhl.

28. Actually, Flaubert affirms in his travel notes that he posed at the tip of a pyramid – South East from the Great Pyramid – for Du Camp in a photo. (cf. Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 56). An image that McCauley identifies as plate 34 of the unpublished photos held in the archive of the Bibliothèque de l'Institut, Paris (cf. McCauley, Elizabeth A, 1982, p.26), though it's very hard to ascertain if the tiny black spot is

Flaubert.

29. Letter of Gustave Flaubert to Ernest Chevalier, 9 april 1851.

30. Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 55.

31. cf. Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*. 1803. London. W. Bulmer & co. Appendix II. p.57

32. cf. McCauley, Elizabeth A, 1982.

33. cf. *ibid.* p.29.

34. Du Camp, *Le Nil*. 2nd ed. 1860. Paris. A. Bourdilliat. p.14.

35. cf. Wordsworth, Jonathan, *Introduction* in Volney, Constantin François, *The Ruins: or A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires*. 2000 (re-print of 1811 ed.) Woodstock Books. Washington D.C.

36. cf. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 55.

37. Volney, Constantin François Chasseboeuf de, comte. [*Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte. English. 1787*] *Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785; ... illustrated with copper plates*. By M. C – F. Volney. Translated from the French. In two volumes...1787. London: printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson. p.267.

38. *ibid.*

39. “Volney n’a rien de ce pionnier du désert qu’ont imaginé certains biographes” [trans. by the author]. Gaulmier, Jean. *Note sur l’Itinéraire de Volney en Égypte et en Syrie* in *Bulletin d’Études Orientales*, vol. XIII, 1949-51. p.49.

40. cf. Skilton, David. *Tourist at the Ruins of London. The Metropolis and the Struggle for Empire* in *Cercles* 17, 2017. pp. 93-119.

41. Volney, Constantin François. 2000 (re-print of 1811 ed.) p.7-8.

42. *ibid.* p.1.

43. cf. notes to p.1. in *ibid.* p.1 and 187.

44. cf. Martier, Roland, “L’extraordinaire, en tout cela, c’est que Volney n’a jamais vu Palmyre” in *La Poétique des ruines en France*, Geneva: Droz, 1974, p. 139; as well as, Gaulmier, “Volney n’a poussé jusqu’à Palmyre et l’évocation qu’il en fait au début des *Ruines* est de pure imagination”, in *L’Idéologue Volney*, p. 323.

45. cf. Wordsworth, Jonathan. 2000. p.4.

46. *ibid.* p.1.

47. Poem that, though written before the journey, finally was published in 1855 within his *Les Chants Modernes*. see Du Camp, Maxime. 1855. Paris. pp.391-403.

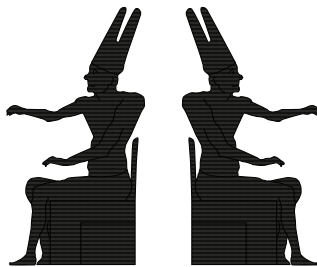
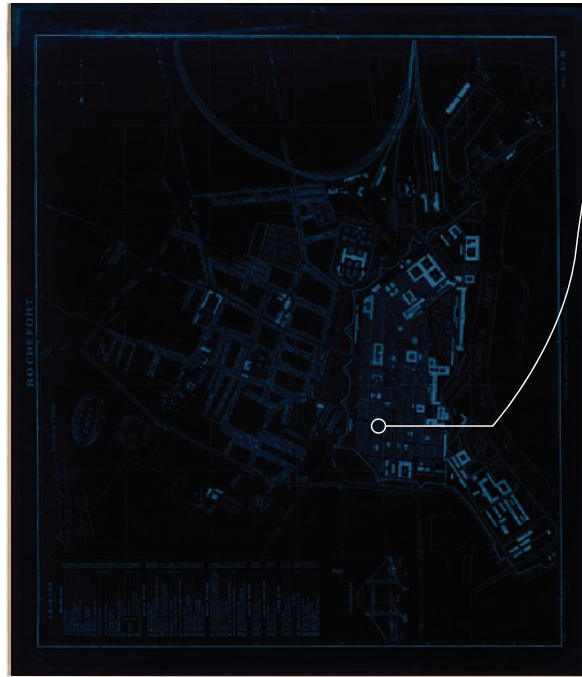
48. cf. Du Camp, Maxime. Ed. Giovanni Bonaccorso. 1972. p. 55.

49. cf. Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 97.

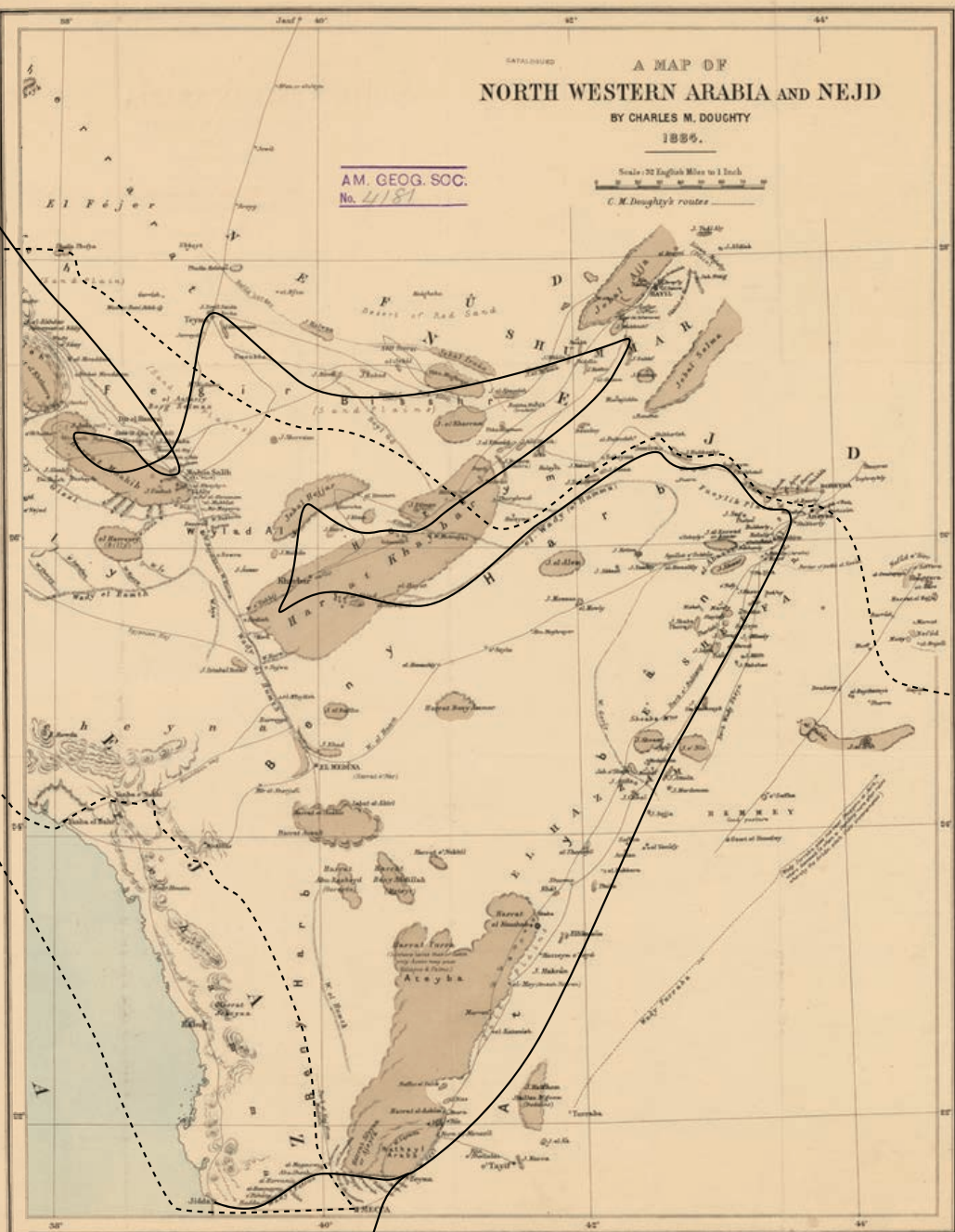
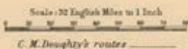
50. cf. *ibid.* p. 97-99.

51. cf. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. especially cf. her 'Prologue: Window Seat' in the volume.
52. In which Ismael starts being assimilated to Du Camp, or as she calls it, a *camera incarnata*. cf. *ibid.* p. 245.
53. Vidler, Anthony. *The writing of the walls: architectural theory in the late Enlightenment*. 1987. Princeton, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 3.
54. Semper, Gottfried, *The Four Elements of Architecture*, trans. by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann. 1989. New York, Cambridge University Press. p. 102.
55. cf. Vidler, Anthony. 1987; as well as Vidler, Anthony. *The Third Typology in Oppositions reader: selected readings from a journal for ideas and criticism in architecture*, 1973-1984 / edited and with an introduction by K. Michael Hays. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. pp.13-16.
56. cf. Rykwert, Joseph. *On Adam's house in Paradise: the idea of the primitive but in architectural history*. 1972. New York, Museum of Modern Art, in association with The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago.
57. Maxime Du Camp in 'Souvenirs Littéraires', as quoted by Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 140.
58. cf. *ibid.* p.138-139.
59. Having it in mind, and apologising for the advancement from the Napoleonic oeuvre. cf. Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Base et le Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*. 1803. London. W. Bulmer & co.
60. Of which the opening is precisely not taken from Du Camp, but borrowed from Amié Rochas, a daguerreotypist temporarily settled in Cairo. cf. Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Paris. Gide et J. Baudry; Sánchez Cardona, Ana Paula. *Materialización de la memoria. Escritura y fotografía como representación de la experiencia del viaje en el siglo XIX*. 2010. PhD, Barcelona. Universitat Pompeu Fabra. p. 204.
61. Despite having been first published as a 25 *livrasons* of 5 plates each, this is the way the album is divided in the copy of the Bibliothèque National de France.
62. Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. p. 48.
63. *ibid.* p.49.
64. Flaubert, Gustave from *Travel Notes*, 24th March 1850 in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 134.
65. *ibid.*
66. Anonymous, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* by...with an introduction by Paul Mirecki.2014. New York, Barnes & Noble. p. VII.
67. Maxime du Camp, *The Crew of the Cange* in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 225.

68. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 145.
69. Barthes, Roland. *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*. 1997. Berkeley, University of California Press. p. 5.
70. Flaubert, Gustave. *Lettres d'Égypte de Gustave Flaubert*, edición facsimilar. 1965. Paris, Nizet, p.182.
71. Volney, Comte de. *Travels Through Syria and Egypt...*1787, London. 1st edition. vol 1. p.381
72. 'Avataras' in Du Camp, Maxime. *Les Chants modernes*. p. 229.
73. Cf. Pevsner, Nikolaus & Lang, S. *The Egyptian Revival in The Architectural Review*. May, 1956. pp. 242-254



Excursus on Arabia Deserta I
Khenti-Amentiu [*Foremost of the*
Westerners]. *Arabian Knights in Disguise*
Mecca, 1888



‘O marvelous travelers! what glorious stories
We read in your eyes as deep as the seas.
Show us the caskets of your rich memories
Those wonderful jewels of stars and stratosphere.
We would travel without wind or sail!
And so, to gladden the cares of our jails,
Pass over our spirits, stretched out like canvas,
Your memories with their frames of horizons.
Tell us, what have you seen?’
Baudelaire, Charles, *Le Voyage* in *Les Fleurs du Mal* dedicated
to Maxime Du Camp.

It is an old truism that clothes are the ultimate vessels of Modernity. Amidst the Parisian vogue, it was Charles Baudelaire who affirmed that, “always roaming the great desert of men”, *The Painter of Modern Life* is capable of subtracting from “the dress, the hairstyle, and even the gesture” “the transient, the fleeting, the contingent” that forms Modernity – clarifying that “[i]f for the dress of the day, which is necessarily right, you substitute another, you are guilty of a piece of nonsense that only a fancy-dress ball imposed by fashion can excuse.” Though it is most likely that Baudelaire was not thinking of his costumes when he dedicated his poem *Le Voyage* to Maxime du Camp, the clothes were of some relevance in the journey along the Nile. The semi-nudity with which the Nubian Man is presented in most of the photographs doesn’t mean that clothing was a light question. But as the Nubian figure has been treated in the previous stop, I would like to deal with the idea of dressing by flipping the camera, focusing the attention on the notion of self-portrait. The figure that populates Du Camp’s photographs is not only Nubian. Rather, he is none other than Flaubert himself, who surprisingly appears in plate number 3¹ (Fig. 1).

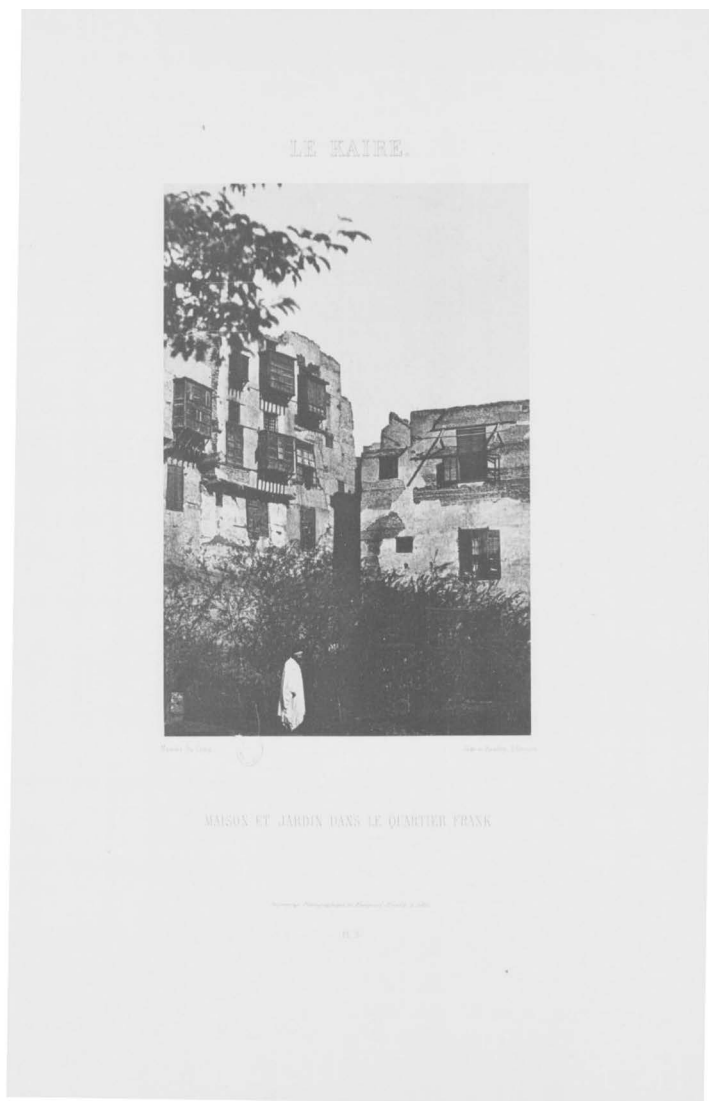


Fig. 1- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852.
Plate 3. ©BnF Gallica



ORIENTAL ALBUM.

CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, AND MODES OF LIFE,

IN

THE VALLEY OF THE NILE.

ILLUSTRATED

FROM DESIGNS TAKEN ON THE SPOT,

BY E. PRISSE.

WITH DESCRIPTIVE LETTER-PRESS,

BY JAMES AUGUSTUS ST. JOHN,

AUTHOR OF

"EGYPT AND MOHAMMED ALI," AND "MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF ANCIENT GREECE."



LONDON:

JAMES MADDEN, 8, LEADENHALL STREET.

M.DCCC.LI.

Surprisingly, first because this is the only occasion in the album that a person other than the Nubian Man appears. Second because Flaubert appears in Oriental robes, standing in front of a background with two derelict buildings of the *quartier Franc*. And, third because he was little photographed in life: “I would never allow anyone to photograph me. Max did it once, but I was in Nubian costume, standing, and seen from a considerable distance, in a garden.”² Supposedly, as he wrote to his mother, another portrait was taken, standing on the tip of a pyramid. As we have seen, a pose that he was probably not proud of. The photograph has never been found³. Finally what is not that surprising is that he defines the costumes as Nubian.

What is perhaps more anecdotal is the fact that architects also gave a relevance to Oriental garments. This is the case of Prisse d’Avennes, who Du Camp asked to provide plans of the monuments in Egypt to be published in the photographic album (see Stop 1, Fig. 10). Perhaps it is anecdotal, but at the same time it is symptomatic of the Western interest in Oriental attire – an interest that is more a kind of mania. Prisse d’Avennes was obsessed with costumes. The role of the architect was not only to move around sketching plans, sections and perspectives, but also to capture certain exotic life. Prior to the drawings he prepared for Du Camp’s publication, he had already collaborated with the British traveller James Augustus St. John through the illustrations of the costumes-book titled *Oriental Album* (1848). A series of “designs taken on the spot” – as the subtitle goes – illustrated the dresses of characters in the valley of the Nile. Indeed, the Nubian is one of the figures presented (Fig. 3). The exotic clothes – or their lack of thereof – probably shocked the British reader. But what was a further oddity was the opening page – presenting a bearded Arab Sheikh, smoking on his luxurious Oriental carpet (Fig.2) – especially when in the lower left corner under the Persian carpet the reader stumbles upon the title ‘Portrait of the late George Lloyd, Esq.’ Not a very native name to start with. Yet, Prisse d’Avennes’s deceased friend and fellow traveller introduced the exotic album. Both of British blood – though loose connections with the centre

(previous page)
 Fig. 2- St. John,
 James Augustus.
Oriental Album:
characters, costumes
and modes of
life in the valley
of the Nile /
illustrated from
designs by E. Prisse
; with descriptive
letterpress by J.
A. St. John. 1848.
 © British
 Library.

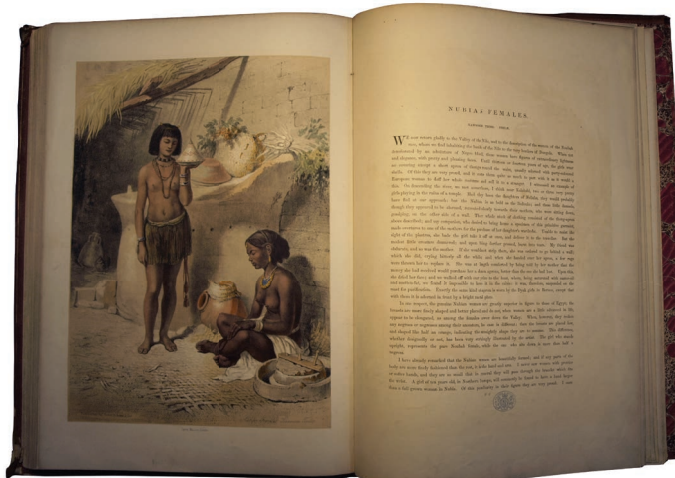


Fig. 3- *ibid* pp.46-47 & pp. 50-51

of the Empire – they spent years in Egypt measuring and drawing monuments. Eventually, the foreigners adopted the local costumes and a fascination for them (Fig. 4). A fashion which back in London already was an object of appeal, just three years before the exoticism of the Great Exhibition.

However, if for the capital it was a taste for exotic allure, for the British in arid lands ‘desert-wear’ was a question of survival in an environment where lack of camouflage meant getting into trouble. Nevertheless, the adoption of local outfit was not the only solution. A radical non-capitalising endurance of one’s Britishness was a different form of travelling, less chameleonic and more Darwinian in its trust of ‘evolved’ costumes. Epitomising this position was Charles Montagu Doughty⁴. The fashion debate is clearly delineated in the introduction that T. E. Lawrence prepared for Doughty’s famous *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1926). There he affirmed the existence of two opposite kinds of Englishmen in the desert. The first one “feel[s] deeply the influence of the native people, (...) imitat[ing] the native as far as possible, and so avoid[ing] friction in their daily life.” The downfall of this first kind, as Lawrence points, is in that they “imiat[e] them so well that they are imitated back again.” The second kind – of which Doughty is the paramount example – are the ones that, finding themselves in exile, “reinforce their character by memories of the life they have left.” As opposed to the inculturation of the first kind, they followed Lawrence’s argument that the desert’s “barrenness and openness make its inhabitants frank. (...) Words in the desert are clear-cut.” That “contagion of truthfulness” made them just simply reaffirm their convictions. The impressions of this second kind upon the locals is that they represent “an ensample of the complete Englishman, the foreigner intact.”⁵

Whereas the flaunty Westerner has some of Modernity’s self-assured claim for veracity in their clothing, the tendency is that their stories have really nothing worth concealing. Their contempt for covering up manifests that they had but little to reveal. Their stories tend to be paradoxically less eventful in their lack of camouflage. As

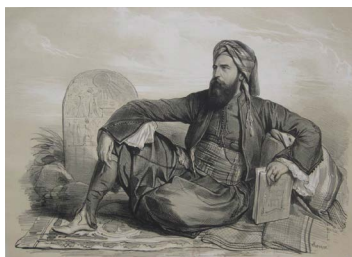


Fig. 4a- Lloyd, George. *Egypt, Bedouin campsite in the desert.*
(unpublished) Lloyd MSS 034. 31 December 1842. © Griffith
Institute, University of Oxford.

Fig. 4b- Achille Emile Prisse d'Avennes, *Portrait.* ©BnF

Fig. 4c- Déveria, Achille. *Emile Prisse d'Avennes.* M4361-
01©BnF

opposed to that “clear-cut” clothes of English-fashion, Lawrence’s first kind followed a more ambiguous costume. Disguise was at the centre of their fashion abroad. Particularly in Arabia, this was not a mere question of adaptation, but rather of survival in a forbidden land. This is clearly the case in the journey of William Gifford Palgrave. Jesuit priest, soldier and protégé of Napoleon III; the British traveller was basically a spy in the Arabian Peninsula. The point of departure for his incursion in 1862-3 was as simple as follows. “Yemen and Hejaz, Mecca and Medinah are no longer mysteries to us nor are we wholly without information on the districts of Hadramaut and ‘Oman. But of the interior of the vast region (...) what do we as yet really know (...)?” The Peninsula had a coastal familiar landscape but unknown land in its core. The unfilled patches on the map did not at all mean desert – lack of inhabitation – but they were rather an indication of lack of information from Westerner sources. Only incursions disguised as natives could “fill up the blank in the map.”⁶

“Myself and my companion were dressed like ordinary middle-class travellers of inner Syria (...) a long stout blouse of Egyptian hemp, under which, unlike our Bedouin fellow-travellers, we indulged in the luxury of the loose cotton drawers common in the East, while our coloured-head-kerchief, though simple enough, were girt by ‘akkals or head-bands of some pretensions to elegance; the loose red leather boots of the country completed our toilet.”⁷

The incognito of Palgrave was embodying the *incognita* of the land. This embodiment was taken to a deeper meaning in the journey of Richard Burton. The Briton departed from London on April, 3 1853, his Eastern dress being called into question as excessive – an advice that later on proved to be right, as his impedimenta called the attention for being too Oriental for the Oriental themselves⁸. Perambulating in Persian wanderer outfit, his journey didn’t lack moments of suspicion from the locals. His strategy was simple: to the layer of (disproportionate) costume an inner one had to be engraved in order “[to] convince the bystanders that the sheep-skin covered a

real sheep.”⁹ Under the sumptuous first skin, the locals were to find a proper Muslim flesh. A double disguise that made him not only invest in expensive imported fabrics, but in the study of the religion, having to pass rigorous tests on the doctrines in the presence of recognised Muslim theologians during his trip¹⁰. Furthermore, the process of ‘incarnation’ was taken to the inner level of becoming a mark in the skin, when days before his departure he received circumcision while already being 31 years old¹¹. That enabled him to penetrate further than any other non-Muslim before. Only Johann Ludwig Burckhardt – under the guise of “Sheikh Ibrahim Ibn Abdallah” – had previously been able to deliver a trustworthy description of Medina. But having fallen sick, his account missed the penetralia of the city¹². Burton’s scar opened for him the doors of rites and ceremonies that were locked for non-Muslims¹³. Hidden in his ‘Hamail’ – a pocket-size Koran for pilgrims – Burton annotated and sketched impressions of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina; an act that would have led to the death penalty for espionage – something that not even his permanent wound would have been able to disguise¹⁴. Not for nothing the beautiful unfolding published images of Burton’s book are almost the most precious descriptions of his account (Fig. 6). They are centred precisely on buildings and costumes, the latter being the key to the former.

His final coming to encounter Mecca was revelatory,

“There at last it lay, the bourn of my long and weary Pilgrimage, realising the plans and hopes of many and many a year. The mirage of Fancy invested the huge catafalque and its gloomy pass with peculiar charms. There were no giant fragments of hoar antiquity as in Egypt, no remains of graceful and harmonious beauty as in Greece and Italy, no barbarous gorgeousness as in the buildings of India; yet the view was strange, unique – and how few have looked upon the celebrated shrine! I may truly say that, of all the worshippers who clung weeping to the curtain, or who pressed their beating hearts to the stone, none felt for the moment a deeper emotion that did the Haji from the far-north. It was as if the poetical legends of the Arab spoke

MAP
OF
ARABIA

illustrative of
W. G. PALGRAVE'S

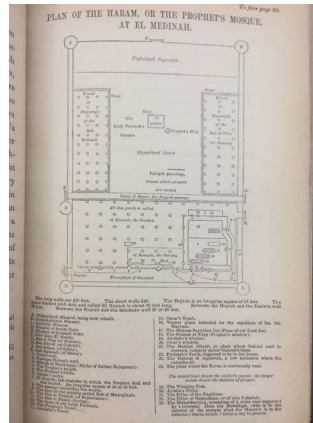
Journey in 1862-63.



truth, and that the waving wings of angels, not the sweet breeze of the morning, were agitating and swelling the black covering of the shrine. But to confess humbling truth, theirs was a high feeling of religious enthusiasm, mine was the ecstasy of gratified pride.”¹⁵

Both titles of his account – *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* – and Palgrave’s – *Personal Narrative of a Year’s Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia* – are indicative of their project: a wandering in the desert in search of conversion at a personal level. Mecca culminated Burton’s journey, and he transformed the Hajj into the paradigmatic form of the Westerner’s journey in the desert: a Pilgrimage which vanishing point is in finding an alien city and whose aim is at conversion, a change of identity incarnating the Other. However, a notion that doesn’t belong to Burton only, but also to Du Camp who described himself as, “[a]ccording to family tradition we have Arab blood in our veins. I would not be surprised: the delicious sensation that pervaded me every time I live under a tent, or slept on the sand beneath the sky, or journey towards the unknown like a hadji in search of an ideal Mecca (...)”¹⁶ Even though the garments played their role, Burton was more precise, describing this conversion as the discovery of the ‘kayf’ – the untranslatable form-of-life of the Arab. A way of living which the mother-tongue could not come to terms with, but whose closest form of expression was in the act of contrasting: in the difference between “the clammy grey fog, that atmosphere of industry which kept us at anchor off the Isle of Wight” and the “silent and still (...) monotonous melody of the East.”¹⁷ Britain and Arabia. A mirror image that only the pilgrim could behold.

Though we have seen that Burton’s exclusive images of Medina were valuable, the point of ‘conversion’ – of changing one’s identity for the one of the Other – raises the question whether for architecture it was not only a question of the monuments out-there. Rather, I would argue that, along with the imported images, the domestic realm back-home was as relevant a source. In the vanishing point of the argument



(previous page)
Fig. 5- Map of Arabia illustrative of W.G. Palgrave's Journey in 1862-63 in Palgrave, William Gifford. 1873. © British Library.

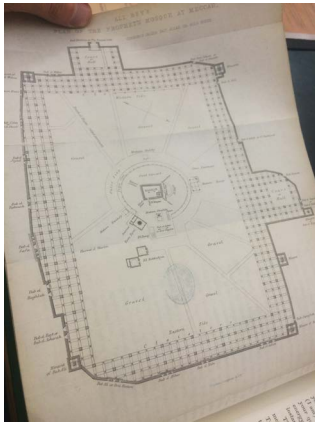


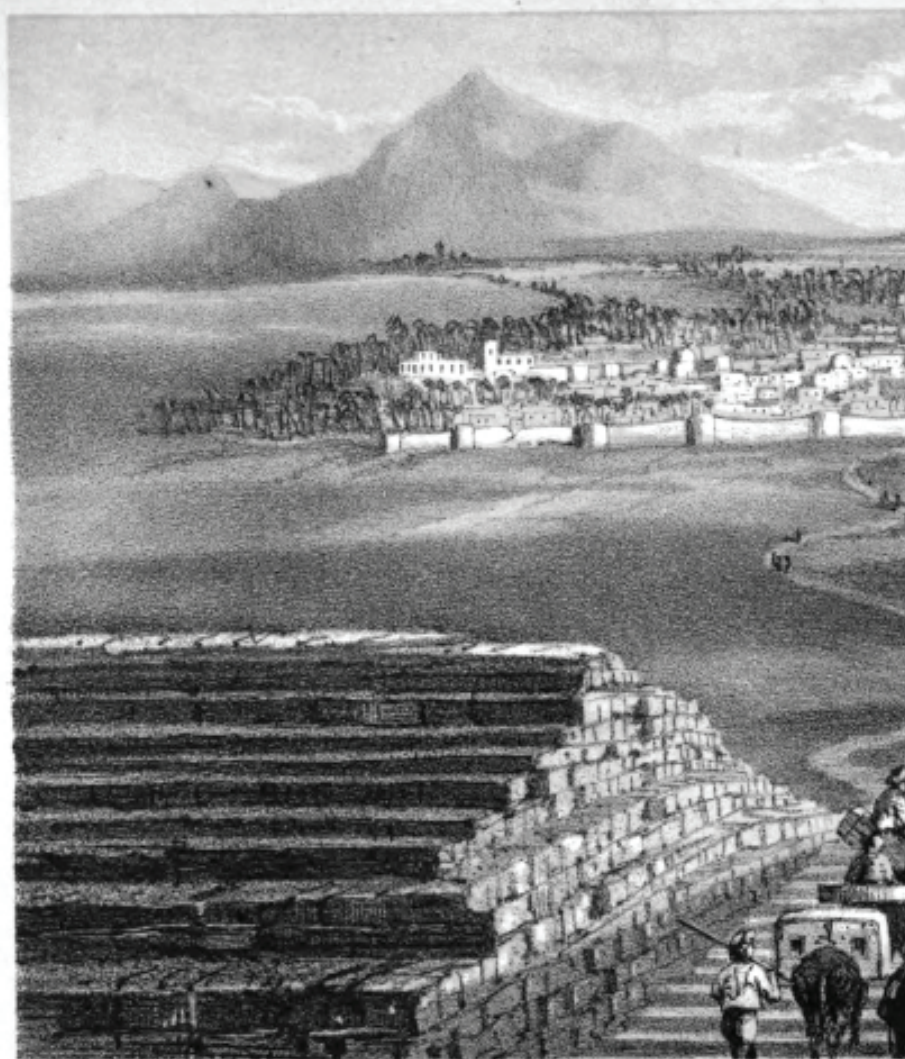
Fig. 6a-Letchford, Albert- Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890), in *Arab Dress* published in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 1.

Fig. 6b- *Plan of the Haram of the Prophet's Mosque, at El Medinah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 60.

Fig. 6c- *Ali Bey's Plan of the Prophet's Mosque at Meccah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 485.

Fig. 6d- *Plan of El Medinah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 456. © British Library.

(following page)
Fig. 7- *View of El Medinah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. i.



A. WILSON DEL.

VIEW OF EL
TAKEN FROM THE HARRAH (ON



WANDART 11111

MEDINAH.
RIDGE | WEST OF THE TOWN.

Fig. 8a- Letchford, Albert. *Sir Richard Burton's Smoking Room*
(in Trieste, Italy). Orleans House Gallery. © Richmond upon
Thames Borough Art Collection



is the question whether the influence was only brought about by illustrated books, or rather the domestic realm took a relevant role in the importing of the realms exterior to the metropolis. A sketch of Vivant Denon's house is illuminating (Fig. 8b). Returning after his journey in Egypt, his house is full of amateurs sketching an Oriental character. While it is not clear whether the model is Denon himself – otherwise possibly being the man with spectacles – the point is they don't draw any Egyptian object brought to Paris. What they depict is an Orientalist character, comfortably sitting on his couch, engulfed in his exotic outfit. What is retraced by ink in the drawing is the set of characters and their action. What perhaps passes unnoticed is the lightly sketched bourgeois domestic interior. What I would like to argue is that both model and interior are to be understood under the same line-thickness. This is a question hard to explore with Du Camp and Flaubert who, though they internalised the Nubian man, didn't change their identity on an exterior level back in Paris. This is partly due to the fact that Flaubert's conversion, as we have seen, was from the Romantic Exoticism of his early writings into the Realism of *Madame Bovary*. To explore the argument, we have to find a more paradigmatic case in French literature. An example is Pierre Loti – fully-fledged Exotic writer.

Pierre Loti understood very well Burton's idea of Pilgrimage to an alien city. He also understood the instrumentality of disguise. Where he, though, got it all wrong was in the due correspondence between city and dress-code. Loti's was the dislocating idea of a Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem in Arab robes¹⁸. Something he did in 1894. The literary product of this journey was his influential *Le Désert*¹⁹, a classic of desert-writing. In any case, despite not carrying the right clothes and convinced of his atheistic disbelief, in the Garden of Getsemani he found revelation. "[U]ne illumination, plus ou moins fulgurante, qui l'aurait *contraint* à reconnaître l'évidence de la foi. [an illumination, relatively dazzling, which would *force* him to recognise faith.]"²⁰ A certain conversion took place in the holy city of Jews and Christians despite missing the right vestments.



Fig. 8b- Denon, Dominique-Vivant (1747-1825). *Denon chez lui : Amateurs*. c. 1820 ©BnF

Travelling all over the world, he again mistook the costume and the city when he turned up in the centre of Paris dressed as Osiris (Fig. 10). Of course, this time it was for a bourgeois fancy dress ball – the only occasion that Baudelaire would have indulged in non-Modern dress code – at the opening of the house of his literary patroness, Juliette Adam²¹. That night, Loti was only one mask among other masks. However, in his case Oscar Wilde's dictum 'a mask tells us more than a face' is quite literal. The mask is in fact his attitude towards Paris. What is found in his personal archive is that the mistake of the party was not a momentary lapse. The record holds a whole collection of his portraits in exotic attires. Disguised as Bedouin, Turk, Albanian, or Arab warrior, Loti portrayed himself as a multitude of ever-changing characters, following the culture his travels were taking him to. Arguably he was – along with Victor Hugo – one of the most photographed French authors of the XIXth century²². Some portraying further costume parties, others as postcards that he sent in his travels, or simply published in the press²³, what gathers all of them is not the model but the background. They were paradoxically taken in Rochefort, France, where he built himself a home. The house had an Arab chamber, a Moorish 'mosque', a Turkish salon, and a monkish bedroom, that he built as his travels were developing. In a better contextualising effort, this occasion, room and dress code, at last, corresponded. And yet, the house was in Rochefort. Loti developed a mania of self-portrayal in which the costume was not intended to be the key for moving abroad, but to be a stranger at home. This form of disguise is not the 'passing unnoticed' of Burton or Palgrave, but rather the paradoxical import into France of what was revealed abroad.

Looking at the photographs one might think that the house he refurbished in his native Rochefort was following the Semperian maxim of 'Bekleidung'[clothing]. As if the project was a way of displaying the souvenirs of his sojourns, the exotic memorabilia impregnated the design of the house. This was not the case. It was rather the opposite. Exoticism on an aesthetic level is too inadequate



Fig. 9a- 1894. Palestine. Pierre Loti (centre), journey with Léo Thémèze
(and the Duke of Dino for a part), in Vercier, Bruno, *Pierre Loti,
Portraits (...)* 2002. Flammarion. Paris. p. 40.

Fig. 9b- Loti, Pierre. *Voyage en Terre Sainte, Janvier-
Juin 1894*. 37 fotogr. Nég.surverre.n.et.b.;6,5x9cm.
MPLP4,MPLP7,MPLP8,MPLP13, MPL P16 & MPL P21. ©

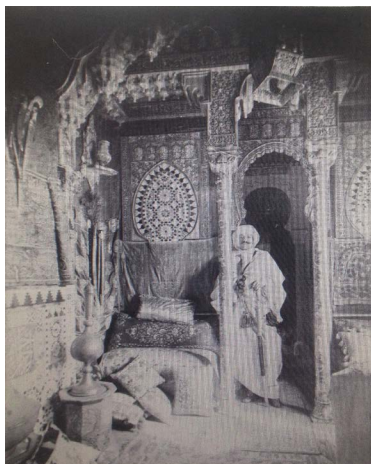
BnF

Fig. 10- *Pierre Loti dressed as Osiris*. 20 February 1887. MPL. ©

BnF







to understand Loti's purposes. Form here doesn't follow costume, but the other way around. The meaning of the dresses, as he understood them, was inferred from the project for his house. Roland Barthes, in love with the "minor, démodé"²⁴ figure of Loti and being one of the most influential contributors for the re-emergence of the author in contemporary culture²⁵, saw Loti as "a man (...) desecrated from the West and Modernism."²⁶ Like Maxime du Camp's apartment, Loti's house was proposed as an other to the space of Modernity. Deliberately lacking electricity or gas to avoid the "intolérable (...) tyrannie de l'électricité"²⁷ the house was a way of being in the city but not from the city. Or, as he considered himself, the enemy of "l'enfer des usines [the hell of the factories]" and "de la laideur utilitaire [the utilitarian ugliness]"²⁸; his house operated as Trojan horse against Modernity which aim was to 'épater le bourgeois'²⁹. The incursion this time, rather than in Nubia, Mecca, or Jerusalem, was into Paris itself. House and costumes worked in unison.

There's a tendency to compare Loti with Des Esseintes, the main character of Huysmans's *À Rebours* (1884) in their common project of establishing a retreat just on the verge of the metropolis³⁰. However, if at the end of the book Des Esseintes is forced to return to Paris just to die, Loti went back to the metropolis in the form of Death. The selection for his costume of Osiris – the Egyptian god of afterlife – can be seen either as simply a fortuitous joke or a calculated attack against his social milieu. Peter Turberfield sees all of Loti's portraits moving in the tension between both – a joyous assault³¹. It is interesting in Osiris's guise that, beyond the fancy frugality of the party, he portrayed himself in the ball gowns. Full frontal, three-quarters, profile...the series of portraits didn't intend to just simply immortalise the joke, but were a further reflection on the masquerade. On a first layer, the costume worked as provocation. "Hélas, Hélas! qui nous sauvera de la pacotille moderne, du faux luxe, de l'uniformité et des imbéciles? [Alas, Alas! Who will save us from the modern junk, false luxury, the uniformity and the idiots?]"³² The change in uniform simply acted as attack against uniformity. On a deeper layer, the camera



(previous page)
 Fig. 11- *Pierre Loti disguised in the rooms of his home at Rochefort, France.*
 MPL, MPL/
 FDH, Bruno Vercier (p.22), Bruno Vercier (p.103), Bruno Vercier (p.27), MPL M229, MPLG7, MPL20, MPL21, MPL18, MPL4



Fig. 12a- Loti, Pierre. *Mosquée.* MPL G 48.

Fig. 12b- Loti, Pierre. *Salon Turc.* MPL G 52.

Fig. 12c- Loti, Pierre. *Vue de la 'chambre arabe': murs à arcades festonnées, blanchis à la chaux, divan coussin rond...* MPL 23.

Fig. 12d- Loti, Pierre. *La chambre à coucher.* MPL 15. ©

enabled him to perpetuate the attack by constructing his identity as a series of exotic characters. Shot after shot, Pierre Loti – which already was the pseudonym for Julien Viaud³³ – was creating his public persona³⁴. Indeed, Osiris as a subject for a photograph invigorates the narrative of the technology of the camera as perpetuation of the flashing moment. Camera and afterlife were linked together by the click of the shooter. Roland Barthes developed his whole last essay on the relationship between Death and Photography³⁵, a sort of self-eulogy published just a few months before his passing away. However, if there he affirmed that “by making the (mortal) photograph into the general and somehow natural witness of ‘what has been’, modern society has renounced the Monument”³⁶, this was not the case with Loti. It rather seems that he was intending to resurrect the dispute around the Obelisk at Place de la Concorde through non-revolutionary means (or, at least, media).

This is precisely where the selection of Osiris is problematic. While pretending to wear the mask of ‘desecrator of Westernisation’³⁷ – as Barthes put him – he is basically disguised as the *Kbenti-Amentiu* – as Osiris was known in Ancient Egypt – the *Foremost of the Westerners*³⁸. If Burton wore a double-layered vest, on pretending to go East against the Occidental, Loti was actually further West than the Westerners. His problem was not that of the classic Orientalist critique that affirms his *clichés*[photographs] were just simply that, clichés³⁹. It has more to do with the *click-self*, the mania of representing one’s identity in front of the camera as an-other. Loti would call this tendency something like ‘mummification’ or, at least, one of his most striking portraits is illustrated as such (Fig. 15). The postcard was prepared after his journey to Egypt in 1907 where he saw the mummy of Ramsés II⁴⁰. To the left is a photograph of the deceased pharaoh, ‘mummified the year AD 1258’. Perpetuated in life by the embalming, the corpse is uncannily trapped in a state between life and death. To its right, the profile of Loti mirrors the ancient body, simply clarifying that he is not mummified as per the year 1909. He never got to be anointed à la

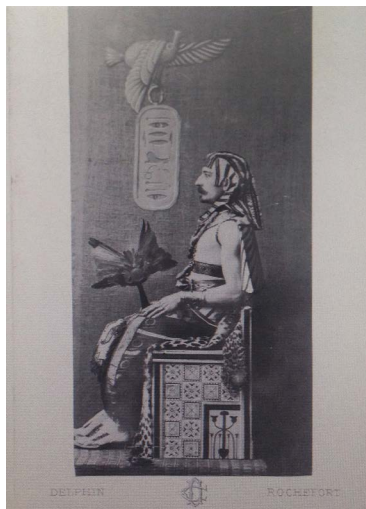


Fig. 13- Loti, Pierre. *La maison de Pierre Loti à Rochefort. Façade de la maison.* MPL 2. © BnF



Fig. 14a- *Pierre Loti dressed as Osiris*. 20 February 1887. MPL
M158, MPL M157, MPL, MPL. © BnF

Fig. 14b- "Pierre Loti camouflaged as Julien Viaud in the garden
of his house in Rocheford." circa 1907, in Vercier, Bruno. 2002.
p 136.



Egyptian; the camera was enough for perpetuating his state. What the double image does, as much as the rest of his portraits in disguise, is operating an identification. In the costume, Loti plays being Ramses II. In the photograph, it becomes something else. As Bruno Vercier reviews the images of Osiris, “pour un instant fixé à tout jamais, Loti *est* Osiris. [for a moment fixed forever, Loti *is* Osiris] (his italics)”⁴¹ It is the moment of the portrait that identifies character and costume, but it is an identification that the click fixed forever in time.

In that instantaneous chink between the posing and the postcard lies the problem of Loti's project against Paris. Loti plays being Ramses II. As clarified in the parenthesis, Ramses II is Sesostris, who, as Herodotus mythicised, colonised parts of Europe. A perfect mirror image that Loti could use against France. However, between the joke and its perpetuation in the photo the ‘ha-ha’ makes an about-turn. Trying to define his identity by mirroring the other, he was internalising it. He was not himself, but the appropriation of the other by a double image. Loti's portraits have recently attracted research that sees in the disguise a multifaceted identity⁴². This interest departs from the premise that his photos were ‘projecting’ the self. My argument is the opposite, they were not projecting but absorbing, internalising. His identity is not revealed by the kaleidoscopic collection of costumes. Rather, the costumes disguise a simple stereoscopic identity, that is better shown in the mummifying postcard. Since he was young, Loti had developed a fascination with stereoscopic images that he collected⁴³ (Fig. 16). It was on his journey to Istanbul, four years before going to Egypt, that he started shooting with the popularised Vérascopie Richard⁴⁴ where the camera produces double images, *almost identical*, however one displaced from the other laterally, so as to emulate the position of human eyes. That way, the superposition of the images enables the illusion of being in relief. Stereoscopy is a technology that moves towards ‘identification’. Loti identifies himself with the Arab, the Turk, or the Moorish: “moi qui, par je ne sais quel phénomène d’atavisme lointain, me suis toujours senti l’âme à moitié arabe. [I who, by an unknown reason of the phenomenon of faraway atavism, I have

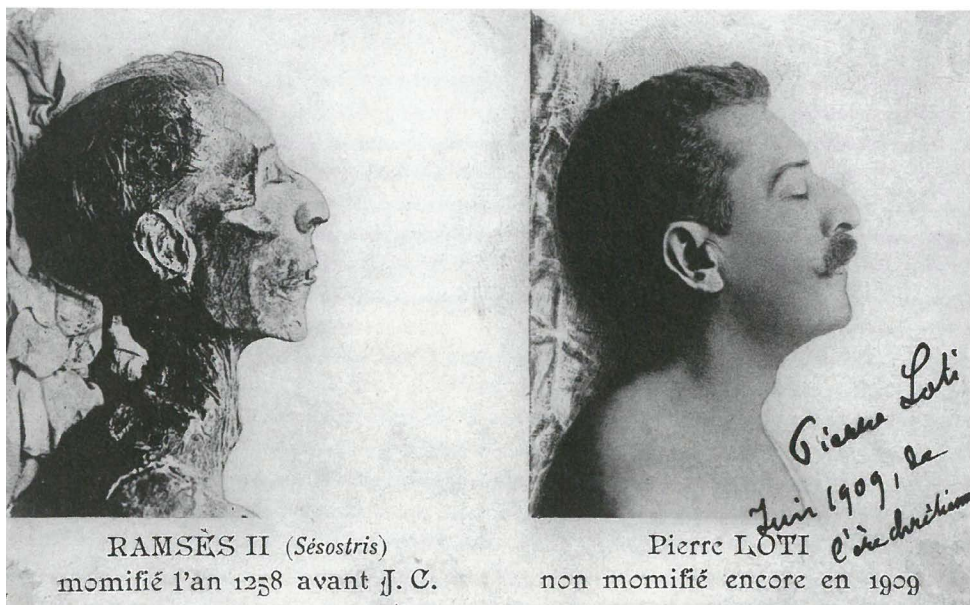


Fig. 15- Loti, Pierre. *Carte postale publiée par Loti pour son usage personnel* circa 1908-1910, in Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p 156.

always felt myself half-Arab in soul.]”⁴⁵ The identification is ‘almost’; a hybrid between Arab and French, a stereoscopic identity to the right photograph as local, the other as outsider, or the portrait in exotic attire taken in the studio down the street. However, it is precisely in that hybridity, in that ‘almost identity’, that Loti’s project cracks. This difference did not enhance the contrast, but rather appropriated the otherness of the other. His portraits are almost the same, but in France.

To a certain extent his photographs follow Homi Bhabha’s argument that the coloniser’s imposition of an identity in the body of the colonised transforms the latter in “almost the same but not quite.”⁴⁶ Bhabha defines this strategy as ‘mimicry’ in that the colonised becomes an incomplete copy of the coloniser, an “almost the same but not white.”⁴⁷ The colonised is taken as a copy, but always with a certain degree of fraud. Obviously, Loti’s case is a paradoxical reverse in which Loti’s “white skin, black mask” – to flip Franz Fanon’s argument – produced a mirror image of the colonised subject⁴⁸. A mirror image that did not overcome the possibility of being outside the metropolis, but rather the appropriation of the other through a means different from power struggle. Intending to use the costumes as weapon against the bourgeois, it became a boomerang. The camera was the means of appropriation of the identity of the other.

Modern technology of vision operated a different form of colonialism. Taken to the outside of the metropolis, the camera started framing, defining a precise limit to that ‘outside’. The Nubian Man and the exotic self-portraits were forms in which the exteriors were delimited, circumscribed. It was the viewfinder that triggered the first step; the second, the eye behind. Through the question of lack of identity in the metropolis, the allure of the exotic attracted Westerners abroad. Through the use of costume back home, the West incorporated the Oriental character; the metropolis internalised its outside. The ‘mummifying’ process of Loti – or Flaubert’s ‘travel writing as mummy-autopsy’⁴⁹ – did not correspond exactly to the

‘mimicrying’ of contemporary post-colonial critique. Loti, Burton and Du Camp form a group of characters in a liminal state that escapes the categories of ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’. This internalising process has been a colonising mechanism that has disguised itself from historical critique. A similarly banal travesty that has slipped from contemporary concerns as old fashioned irrelevance. But it is precisely in its laughable condition that they become a serious concern. In the tension between mimicry and mockery was the way in which the metropolis was internalising its outsiders. A form of defining the Other with a final “almost the same but inside.”



Fig. 16- *Stéréoclasqueur* that belonged to Pierre Loti. It enabled the storage of plaques and their vision. In Quella-Villéger, Alain & Vercier, Bruno. 2012. p. 10. Fig. 10- *Pierre Loti dressed as Osiris*. 20 February 1887. MPL. © BnF

Endnotes

1. cf. Ballerini, Julia. 2010. p. 79. As well as Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 40-41 and 56.
2. As quoted in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p. 41.
3. cf. Ibid, p. 56.
4. Who Banham considered a 'Desert Father' of a sort when he wrote his *Scenes in America Deserta*. cf. Banham, Peter Reyner. *Scenes in America Deserta*. 1989. MIT Press. London. pp.162-9.
5. Lawrence, Thomas E., *Introduction* in Doughty, Charles M. *Travels in Arabia Deserta*. 1926[1888]. Jonathan Cape Ltd. & The Medici Society. London. p. xx.
6. Palgrave, William Gifford. *Personal Narrative of a Years Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia*. 1873. Macmillan and co. London. p. 1.
7. Ibid., p. 4.
8. Burton, Sir Richard. *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*. 1855. Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans. London. vol. I. p. 7.
9. Ibid. vol. I. p. 8.
10. Assad, Thomas J. *Three Victorian Travellers. Burton, Blunt, Doughty*. 1964. Routledge & Kegan Paul. London. p. 18.
11. McLynn, Frank. *Burton: Snow Upon the Desert*. 1990. John Murray. London. p. 74.
12. cf. *Preface* in Burton, Sir Richard. 1855. p. viii.
13. *ibid.*, p. 13.
14. Burton, Sir Richard. 1855. p. 166.
15. Ibid., p. 403.
16. As quoted in Howe, Kathleen S. *Egypt Recovered: The Photographic Surveys of Maxime Du Camp, Félix Teynard, and John Beasley Greene, and the Development of Egyptology*. (PhD dissertation). 1996. Albuquerque, New Mexico, University of New Mexico. p. 85; from the *Souvenirs littéraires*, p. 313.
17. Ibid. p. 7.
18. Liot, Thierry. *La Maison de Pierre Loti à Rochefort. 1850-1923*. 1999. Editions Patrimoines & Médias. Chauray, France. p. 99.
19. Loti, Pierre. *Le Désert*. 1895. Calmann Levy. Paris. The book belongs to a trilogy he published that same year along with *Jérusalem* and *La Galilée*.
20. Boisdeffre, Pierre de. *Pierre Loti. Ses Maisons*. 1996. Christian Pirot. Saint-cyr-sur-Loire, France. p. 109.
21. cf. Liot, Thierry. 1999. p. 26 and pp. 32-35.
22. cf. Vercier, Bruno. *Pierre Loti, Portraits(...)* 2002. Flammarion. Paris. p. 5.

23. cf. Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p. 21.
24. Barthes, Roland. Préface à *Azîyadé* in *Critique*, February, 1972.
25. Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p. 66.
26. Barthes, Roland. *Le Degré Zero de l'écriture*. 1972. Paris. Points Seuil. p.180.
27. Loti, Pierre. *Nouvelles et récits*. 2000. Paris. Omnibus. p. 606 as well as quoted in Quella-Villéger, Alain. *Pierre Loti: le pèlerin de la planète*. 1998. Bourdeaux, France. Aubéron. p. 360.
28. Loti, Pierre in Liot, Thierry. 1999. p. 91.
29. Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p. 23.
30. cf. Turberfield, Peter J. *Pierre Loti and the Theatricality of Desire*. 2008. New York. Rodopi. p. 170, as well as, Liot, Thierry. 1999. p. 92.
31. cf. Turberfield, Peter J. 2008. p. 197.
32. Loti, Pierre. *Figures et choses qui passaient*. 1898. Paris. Calmann-Lévy. p. 140.
33. cf. Boisdeffre, Pierre de. 1996. p. 11.
34. cf. Vercier, Bruno. 2002. pp. 5-6.
35. cf. Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. 2000[1980] London. Vintage.
36. Ibid. p. 93.
37. cf. note 22 and Turberfield, Peter J. 2008. p. 170.
38. Obviously, the Ancient Egyptians were not referring to Westerners as the geographical split between Oriental and Occidental, but just simply to the dead. cf. Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. 2003. London. Thames & Hudson. pp. 119, 187.
39. cf. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 2006. London. Penguin Books. p. 99 & p. 252.
40. cf. Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p. 156.
41. Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p. 26.
42. cf. Turberfield, Peter J. 2008.
43. cf. Quella-Villéger, Alain & Vercier, Bruno. *Pierre Loti Photographe*. 2012. Paris. Bleu Autour. pp. 5-6.
44. cf. Ibid, p. 10.
45. Pierre Loti as quoted in Boisdeffre, Pierre de. 1996. p. 55.
46. Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. 2004[1994]. London. Routledge Classics. p. 122.
47. Ibid., p. 128.
48. cf. Turberfield, Peter J. 2008. p. 222.
49. see p. 94-95 in Stop 1.

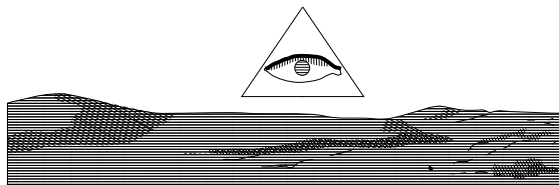
Cluster 2
(the limits of)
VISION



The advent of the airplane brought two seemingly opposing positions in the relationship of the metropolis with its exteriors. On the one hand, the airplane embodied aerial vision. A standpoint which became instrumental for the expansions of the colonial project in its capacity for projecting – planning the territory – and surveilling. On the other hand, the airplane was used as critical tool due to placing the viewer in the air, contemplating the city from without. This cluster proposes problematising the aerial view when this was used in the desert. Certainly, the airplane was one of the most relevant vehicles for exploring the sandy lands, however, once placed there, the aerial view was moving beyond both its empowering and judgemental limits. In the desert, it was neither mainly a matter of surveillance and orthographic vision, nor of a detached standpoint. Rather, these were mixed with the qualities of a magic carpet ride – fantasy, blindness and loss of control.

For this purpose, the cluster will look at two main contexts. The first one is the highly colonial setting of the cartographers of the Royal Geographical Society. Through the notion of frames, Stop 2 will look at the limits established by their tools of vision – the cockpit, the camera, the mapping devices and the map itself as a way of observing the territory – in order to reconstruct the context in which the cartographers were operating. The second context will be the architect's educational journey. Retracing Le Corbusier's trips in Algeria, Stop 3 will explore how, if for the cartographers the desert was about framing, for the architect it was a matter of revelation, of seeing with clear eyes. A notion that will be further problematised in the Excursus with André Malraux's blindness in his flight over Arabia.

The aim of this cluster is to question the detached disembodied eye of the pilot. For this, it will explore the creative process set in motion by viewing the desert from an airplane, showing that high-technological means did not produce a direct process of modernisation but a more complex one in which the relations between positive science, technology, colonisation and the uncontrollable landscape were in an unstable equilibrium that reversed the conventions associated with aerial view.



Stop 2. *The Rise of Phaethon.*
Border Egypt-Libya, 1932



H. W. G. J. Penderel

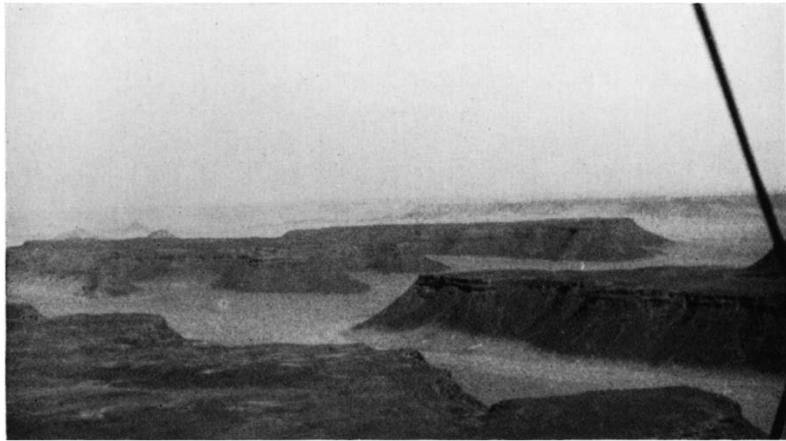


Fig. 1- Penderel, H.W. G. J. RGS 064937 [*Aerial photograph taken while over the Gilf showing outliers*] 1933. ©Royal Geographical Society

RGS 064937 is, to put it bluntly, the evidence of Western visual culture's lack of coming to terms with the desert. Despite centuries of struggle through Biblical narratives, locus of Exoticism, nomadic ethnographers, sci-fi scenery or Western movies, we have not yet been able to cope with the visual representation of the desert. That is crystal clear on seeing the plate, as the contemporary viewer finds himself unable to locate the object of the image. While the shot was used for claiming the finding of the lost city of Zerzura, there is simply no apparent point of focus. There's only what seems to be three black masses of rocky strata rising from the sand and vanishing in a blurred horizon. And to the absent figure is added a background that misses any iconological feature to relate to. It is not an image constructed culturally, and the viewer remains adrift. He will hardly find the canonical tools of visual analysis with which he has been culturally endowed of any use. There's no *intrinsic meaning* à la Panofsky; Gombrich would not find in it visual tricks; and it's definitively not a star in a Warburgian constellation. The image misses Roland Barthes's *punctum*, the "accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)."¹ Nothing draws me towards it other than the puzzling question of what is it that the picture is about. But that's only because Barthes' approach departs from the viewer – Photography as a science whose mediator is the *observer*, "I make myself the measure of the photographic 'knowledge'². Rather, in order to approach this riddle – the absent figure – one has to apply himself to the *studium* – that Barthes so vehemently despises³ – to the investigation of the cultural contexts or frames within which it was produced. To put it in a different way, this image is more the kind of object to be analysed with the procedure that Barthes follows for reading the *Encyclopedia* (1964), not the photographs of *Camera Lucida* (1980). The objects of the *Encyclopedia*, Barthes noticed, are depicted in two-space plates: in the lower part, the object is represented in isolation constituting a sign without life; up above, the vignette shows the object in context where it was normally used, as a *tableau vivant* that gives life to real discourse⁴. RGS 064937 is our lower part. What the contemporary viewer misses

is the vignette, the full picture in which the image was produced. Once placed there, as Barthes argued, it follows that “the vignette (...) always presents itself a little like a riddle: we must decipher it, locate in it the information units.”⁵

I found RGS 064937 researching the papers of the cartographers of the Royal Geographical Society. It was a moment of opposing thoughts. The photo was just one more boring aerial snap of the desert. However, it had the fascinating aspect of claiming the finding of a lost city. Some pilot, at some point in the ‘30s, flying somewhere in the Libyan desert had thought he had seen Zerzura. I thought it was a very telling story of the desert, as it contains one of its main qualities: the moment in which monotony gives way to allurements. It represents the moment in which the highly scientific mindset of the cartographers started to move beyond its limits. What this stop will put forward is how the practices of cartography began to collide with the desert, moving them outside colonial conventions. For this, it will look at the specific frames through which the cartographers were looking at the territory. The notion of framing was crucial for the desert. It was a mechanism for delimiting the unmanageable vastness, and a way of fixing the shifting condition of the desert. But also, it was a way of location of the self within the desert. It was clearly instrumental in aerial photographs, but also unfolds in spaces like the cockpit, in the use of grids for mapping and in the adjustment of their compass. These frames are precisely unfolded by looking at RGS 064937. This Stop will thread its way through the different frames that compose the image.

RGS 064937 is, as any good photograph of the desert, a void. Zerzura is not present in the photograph. However, it is an absence that is defined through its margins. In order to ascertain the meaning of what is missing, in order to enter the city of Zerzura that the photograph claimed to depict, one has to journey through the periphery that frames it.

Frame 1: The Airplane

The first context for understanding Zerzura is, straightforwardly, the place where the image is to be found. Buried in the archived images of the collection of the Royal Geographical Society in London, RGS 064937 emerges as a not particularly appealing item in the jumble. It is indeed not one of the most valuable items of the collection – it would be hard for it to compete with an original pith hat of Sir Henry Morton Stanley, a set of authentic ceremonial leopard claws from the Belgian Congo or Shackelton's Burberry helmet. In any case, it is not even the most beautiful desert depiction. Not even within the set of photographs to which it belongs. That set is perhaps the first obstacle the contemporary viewer has to surmount. The collection where it has been catalogued is composed by the images used for mapping the border between Egypt and Libya during the first half of the XXth century, which at the time basically consisted in a straight line running north-south through unknown desert territory. Cartographers of the Royal Geographical Society competed with their Italian correlatives that intended the same purpose from Libya. In other words, a hard-core colonial project of appropriation of the unknown, for which the contemporary viewer will not feel a special inclination. However, after unearthing the image from its apparent banality, it would be unfair to bury it again through contempt.

Aerial view has become consonant with colonialism for contemporary critique. In the photograph, an oblique dark stripe in the upper right frames this first context. It is the tense wing cable of *Rupert*, the *Gypsy I Moth* biplane from which wing-commander Penderel shot the photograph. His point of view illustrates the shift in representation of the desert operated by the airplane. The black-cloth of Du Camp was substituted by the cockpit of Penderel. By the time of Penderel's shot, the airplane was coming to be a sort of autochthonous species of the Northern African coast. Crossing the Mediterranean during the battles for WWI, throughout the inter-war period the new migratory 205

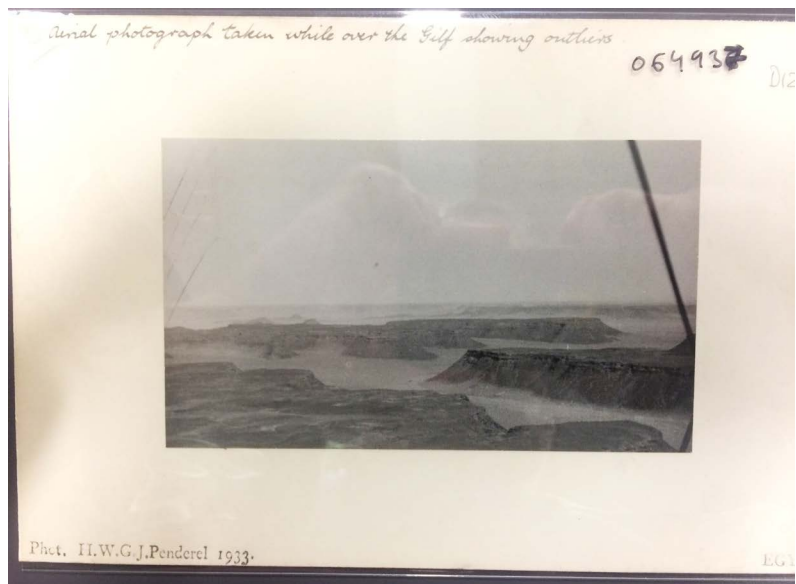


Fig 2- Photograph of RGS 064937 at the Royal Geographical Society. Image by the author

bird changed the dropping of bombs to the shooting of pictures. In the pilot's rear cockpit the machine guns were dismantled and long-foci cameras were installed. With the new geopolitical condition, aerial reconnaissance played a strategic role for the European powers in influencing the unstable colonies. Specifically, on the uncertain Egyptian-Libyan border, the use of the airplane for mapping became an almost literal translation of the Zarathustrian prophesy, "he who will one day teach men to fly will have moved all the boundary-stones; all the boundary-stones will themselves fly into the air with him, he will baptise the earth anew – as 'the weightless'."⁶ Borders were literally being defined from the air, not just simply as the traditional zenithal projection of the mapmakers, but making of that conceptual paradigm the actual standpoint of the beholder. RGS 064937 is a classical depiction of the Apollonian view.

This shift in the location of the viewfinder was relevant; however, it just embodied a point of view that was conceptualised well before. Modernity's fascination with the aerial has traditionally been described in terms of Apollo: the Sun-god, and his associations of creativity and clairvoyance. Fulfilling the promises of a lateralised Apollonian gaze, the winged-eye culminated the overarching imperial projects of the West. As Denis Cosgrove has argued, the figure of Apollo has connected the desires of a global view with imperial notions of mastery through the history of European Modernity. From the rediscovery of Ptolemaic cartography in the fifteenth-century to the culminating icon of *Earthrise* – ultimate exterior point in which the whole Earth is observed⁷ – Cosgrove argues that in the Apollonian perspective, "gazing" – the god-eye distanced, objective, and penetrating view – "(...)upon world and mastering it are increasingly synonymous."⁸ Placing the eye above the earth was a means of grasping, but overall, of mastering, conquering. It is not a surprise that the aerial view is contemporarily read as the paradigmatic form of surveillance. For a reading within that tradition, when Penderel was sailing above the ground he was just following a trajectory that eventually became all-encompassing. Apollo was in the process of

77601



77602



77605



77606



77609



77610



776 03



776 04



776 07



776 08



776 11



776 12



lifting up. My argument here is that Penderel is not to be read like that. While the association of aerial view with empowerment was partly mythologised through the Apollonian, when the airplane was operating in the desert the aerial view is to be understood differently. The viewer was incarnating a different myth. This is simply observed if we keep digging into RGS064937.

A pencil note at the upper right part of its passepartout scribbles 'DI6'. It is the reference number to the reproduction of the original into transparency. The collection where RGS 064937 is to be found now is within a series of lantern slides (Fig.3). Titled 'Gulf Kebir', the twelve images show one of the cartographic journeys to the *gulf* [plateau] – the Arabic for 'rough'. But at first sight what is appealing in the slides is the harmonious contrast between the 'roughness' of the desert and the fluidity of the newcomers: pneumatic tyres, a hand caressing a smooth rock or the airplane effortlessly crossing the air. Isolated from the presentation for which they were gathered, the backlit slides seem like a proto-form of Land Art, a sort of prequel to Robert Smithson's *Monuments of Passaic*. However as in Smithson's, the images cannot be read without the text. Fortunately, the textual 'tour' for RGS 064937 also remained transcribed. The slides were accompanying the meeting of the Geographical Society on the 8th of January, 1934. That evening, along with Penderel, the Austrian writer Dr. Richard Arnold Bermann was lecturing on their joint expedition to the Libyan border earlier the previous year. Introducing them was Major-General Percy Cox, president of the Society, who framed their incursion to the border as one of the efforts for "filling what was a most humiliating blank on the maps." However, along with being an embarrassing void, it was actually also full of "an air of mystery about it" because of the oasis of Zerzura. Voicing the opinion of the audience, Cox finished his introduction by wishing that "whether or not we are to hear to-night about Zerzura, it seems to me indiscreet to inquire, but I hope we may."⁹ Of course, Penderel and Bermann talked about Zerzura. The former presenting the photograph as the

trigger for their latest journey into Gilf Kebir¹⁰. The shot – RGS 064937 – was actually taken a year before: when searching for Zerzura they reached the impenetrable solid wall of the plateau of Kebir. Not finding a way to surmount it with their cars, it was only possible for Penderel's airplane to explore it from the air. They were indeed not the first ones to reach the gates; during the Great War, Dr. John Ball had reached the Gilf. But it was Prince Kemal el Din who had previously given the name to it. By the time of Penderel's flight, the forgotten city was in direct competition with the expeditions of another British Royal Engineer, Ralph Alger Bagnold. The photograph then, became the trigger for maintaining a search for a hole in the wall, a way for land incursion onto the plateau. But if Penderel explained the haystack where they were looking, it was Bermann who described what the needle looked like. He said,

“All through the Middle Ages Arab writers had told about a hidden oasis; the name of *Zerzura* – meaning probably “Oasis of Little Birds” – had been mentioned for the first time in the thirteenth century.

Almásy would quote to me the Arab legends of the “Book of Hidden Treasures” (*Kitab el Kanuz*), where the fabled Zerzura is described as “a white city, white as a dove”. Above the closed door you will see a bird, carved in stone. Open the door and enter. You will find much riches. In the palace, the King is sleeping with his Queen; they sleep the sleep of the enchanted. Don't go near them, only take the treasure.”¹¹

Obviously neither quite the typical scientific object of research, nor the common colonial subject. Nevertheless, a city whose only reference was a thirteenth-century treasure hunter's Baedeker to the Libyan desert was the aim of an expedition financed by the Society. Actually, not just one expedition, but a number of them. A race to find Zerzura was displacing the figure of the gentleman explorer of the 19th century by the scientist of the 20th. The scene of the battle was similar: the desert. But the architectural point of departure and arrival moved from Charles Barry (who in fact also had his sojourn in

(previous page) Fig. 3- Photograph of *Series of Lantern Slides titled 'The Gilf Kebir' by Penderel, H.W.G.J.* at the Royal Geographical Society. RGS 064937 is in the central row to the left. Image by the author



the desert¹²) and the Neo-Renaissance style of his Reform Club (from where Phileas Fogg, among other bourgeois explorers, departed), to the more local flavour of the Royal Geographical Society's Queen Anne style – to the point of being designed by Norman Shaw, master of the Victorian domestic.

Joining the round table that evening there were an Austrian Minister, John Myres – Wykeham Professor in the University of Oxford – Miss Caton-Thompson – of the Royal Anthropological Institute – Professor F. L. Griffith – Emeritus Professor of Egyptology, University of Oxford – and Lieutenant Orde Wingate – well-known for his off-the-limit incursions into the desert. In other words, not the kind of professionals that would be interested in Medieval Arab legends. Nevertheless, their questions on the lecturers praised Penderel and Bermann's expeditions, finding their fascination with the forgotten city somewhat amusing. The only one putting into question their bizarre approach was Orde Wingate. But, actually, it was not to criticise the existence of the myth, but rather to propose a different location for the search. In fact, he had done his own incursion just months before, searching for it adrift the Great Sand Sea, some hundred and fifty miles north of the Gif. Their scientific mind-frame and the technological advancement didn't prevent Zerkura slipping through the conversation. It was the legend that attracted the audience, and the 'air of mystery' of the desert that Penderel was literally moving through in his airplane. He was flying under the radar of scientific conventions, and that winging gave way to a different paradigm. It is difficult to apply a direct colonialist reading to the cartographers of the RGS. Rather than in Apollonian terms, the mapping of their desert is better understood as an illegitimate offspring of the technologies of Modernity; quite literally, it makes more sense to read them through the myth of Phaethon, the bastard son of Apollo and the nymph Clymene¹³. The young Phaethon longed to ride the sun-chariot of his father, an undertaking well beyond his possibilities. After warning of the perils of the celestial sojourn and dissuading him from his whims, through the instance of the daring

Fig. 4- Hendrick Goltzius.

Phaethon from the series *The Four Disgracers*. 1588. ©National Gallery in Prague

Fig. 5- Michelangelo Buonarroti. *The Fall of Phaeton, the four horses and chariot tumbling, with Jupiter above, and four nude figures below*.

1895,0915.517, 1531-33. © The Trustees of the British Museum



Fig. 6- Clayton-East-Clayton, Robert. *A group of crater-shaped hills in the Libyan desert(...)* and *The unknown wadi north of the Gilf Kebir, about 20 miles long, from the air* in F. J. R. R., *A Reconnaissance of the Gilf Kebir by the Late Sir Robert Clayton East Clayton* in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (Mar., 1933), p. 252(b & c).

son, Apollo finally conceded. As Ovid narrated, “[a]nd when poor hapless Phaethon from the height of highest heaven looked down and saw below, far, far below the continents outspread, his face grew pale, his knees in sudden fear shook, and his eyes were blind with light so bright.” And with the fear of the divine enterprise, the lightness of his unfit demigod body was noticed by the horses that run rampant. The course of the sun drew too close to the Earth, setting in flames the North African coast. “Then was Libya’s dusty desert formed.”¹⁴

As myth, the failure of the semi-god depicts the failure of human desires engaging in the ambition of seeing the earth from the god-eye point of view. And with it the mistrust of the technology of the chariot that is believed to enable it, which eventually turns against the human project. In the Greek myth, the desert appears as a permanent scar operating as a reminder of the trauma. However, Penderel is clearly not an ashamed Phaethon who has learnt from his mistakes. The desert, rather than the original trauma, worked as a possibility for the technologies of Modernity to reach beyond the purely techno-scientific scope. It was not yet the ‘Fall of Phaethon’ – that has classically been the tragic moment for depicting the mythological story (Fig. 4 & 5) – but the crucial moment when he has risen. The effort of the cartographers of the RGS was both on mastering through technology and in conceding a ‘loss of control’ over a landscape continuously in flux that avoided being fixed on charts. The mapping of the Libyan desert was a tug of war for the technology of vision of the airplane and the un-mappable desert. In this tension between the two, the fictional lost city of Zerkura was a key element for charting this void.

Frame 2: The Clouds

Heir to the advancements in meteorology brought about by cloud studies through its photographing, aerial mapping of the desert shared with its predecessor the difficulty of fixating an ever-changing topography. In Penderel’s shot, the desert honours its condition, 215

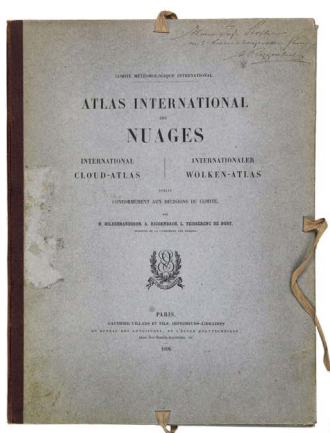
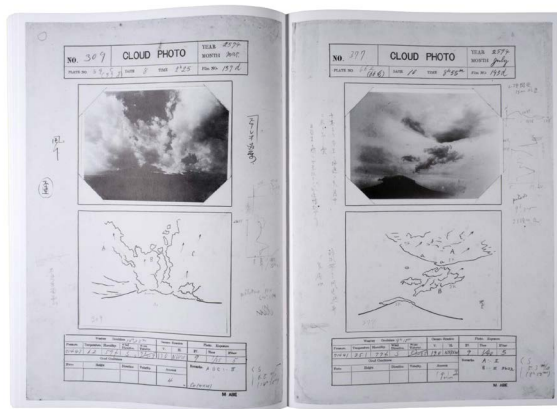


Fig. 7- Riggensbach, Albert. *Atlas International des Nuages*. 1896.
Paris. Gautier-Villars et Fils.

being defined more for its spotless sky rather than by cloudy weather. Nevertheless, the sharp edges of the dark outliers are blurred by a moist haze. This is more apparent in the photographs taken by Robert Clayton-East-Clayton (Fig.6), pilot of *Rupert* on that same flight. A hazy atmosphere erases the distinction between loose sand and cloud. The clouds forming were in fact the alibi for affirming that, despite having found Zerzura, in the photographs it was rather blurred. As recounted in the *Geographical Journal*, “landed fifty-five minutes after taking off and presumed they had found the long-sought oasis of Zerzura. The next thing was to find it by car. Unfortunately, while we were up there was a haze which obscured the edge of the Gifl.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, the mist was a vision that vividly resonated in the two, as just the day before they were about to die of thirst when they got lost. A recollection that Clayton-East-Clayton annotated in his diary as the correspondence between lack of water and imaginary abundance:

“That (...) was the worst time I have ever had. I thought of tankards of beer, England, and all the wet things one does think about on these occasions, wondered why I had spent a lot of money to go and die in a desert, and trying to think what to do about last letters, wills, etc. I remembered all the lovely descriptions of people dying of thirst that I have read about and realized that they were mild in comparison. Finally, I thought of all the drinks I have refused, all the wickednesses I might have committed, and again of water...”¹⁶

Water was a question of survival, but not only for the desert sojourner travelling by foot. Indeed, the scientific reading of cloud formations was a matter of life and death for pilots¹⁷ – not only overflying the desert, but in a more general sense. For the science of nephology – the study of clouds – the camera supposed the necessary device for completing a scientific logic. It basically brought a solution to the difficulty on establishing common parameters in the subject, which would need the visual observation of the formal mutations. Albert Riggenbach, a pioneer in its use, found in the photographic device 217





the solution for generating a body of knowledge that would reach an agreement throughout the nephological community. Capable of arresting the ever-changing shape, the photographic device implied getting hold of the clouds and reaching common ground for scientific consensus. Stabilising and establishing merged into one with the camera that redefined the study of clouds.

Nevertheless, in cartographic terms, setting up a coherent body of knowledge about the formal fluctuations was not enough. Naming particular cloud formations – the cirrus, cirro-stratus, cumulus, fracto-cumulus, cumulo-stratus, or alto-stratus that were systematised in Riggenbach's *International Cloud Atlas* (1896) – was of use, but their spatial location was needed. Not an encyclopaedia, but an atlas. Cartography in geological surveys worked the other way around, having as object the long periods of rock formation not the short-span ephemerality of the clouds. While cartography was interested in



Fig. 9. Ferdinand Quénisset. *Alto-Cumulus et Cirro-Cumulus*.
Dugny near Paris, 1916. Gelatin-silver print © Société
Astronomique de France

arresting time in order to locate space, with the case of the mapping of clouds it was necessary to arrest space. This was the case developed by Masanao Abe, who in the summer while Penderel and Clayton were flying over the Gilf, was shooting Mt. Fuji from his house. His strategy was to fix a geographical coordinate with the aim of mapping time. For it, his method was based on stereophotogrammetry, on the overlapping of two photographs for giving a sense of tridimensionality. However, rather than classic stereoscopic photography that takes the second shoot some centimetres from the original, to emulate the distance between human eyes, Abe set up a second station some 500 metres from his base, synchronising both via telephone. The centre of coordinates set in the mountain and the simultaneity of the shot made the displacement in the angles of the cameras a stereoscopic image in which the cloud was ‘in movement’, and the displacement could be mapped (Fig. 8).

However, the cloud as a subject of the lenses not only challenged cartographic representation, but also some photographic conventions. In the early photographs of clouds such as the ones taken by Riggensbach (Fig.7) or Ralph Abercromby, the camera still belongs to the terrestrial realm. When directed upwards, the horizon disappears from the frame, producing a rupture of perspectival space. With it, the vanishing point – with which visual space was constructed since the Renaissance – was decomposed and the space of the picture became a rarefied one. It is no coincidence that Heinrich Wölfflin saw in the clouds painted by Correggio in San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma (1520-24) the earliest challenge to the logic of cubic perspective: “The church interior, its [the Baroque style’s] greatest achievement, revealed a completely new conception of space directed towards infinity: form is dissolved in favour of the magic spell of light.”¹⁸ It is that space organised by light – rather than the emulation of the eye point of view through vanishing points – that the nephological photographs were portraying. And it is in this space that photography of clouds became something else beyond mapping. A space traced by light was somehow a reflection on the medium as a footprint of light

(previous page)
Fig. 8-Abe, Masanao. Various photographs from Helmut Völter’s *The Movement of Clouds around Mount Fuji. Photographed and Filmed by Masanao Abe*. 2016. Leipzig, Spector Books

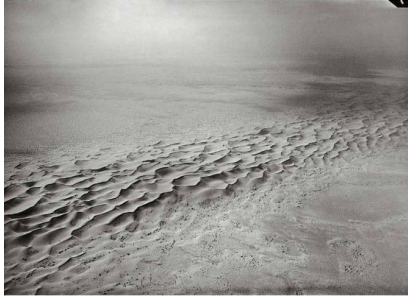


Fig. 10a- Poidebard, Antoine. *Nuages au dessus de Tyr*. MUSÉE VIRTUEL - ANTOINE Poidebard © Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth.

Fig. 10b- Poidebard, Antoine. *Chaîne Nord-palmyrène*. Glass Plate 13 X 18 cm. MUSÉE VIRTUEL - ANTOINE © Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth.

Fig. 10c- Poidebard, Antoine. *Vue du Quargia in Salab(Sahara)*.
Le 29 avril 1937. in *Une Aventure Archéologique...*

over photosensitive material. Eventually, it is with the aeroplane that the photographer comes to inhabit that ether and his photographs immersed in that anomalous space. If the microscope brought a new vision of exploring the interior of life, the camera mounted on the aeroplane brought the possibility of being inside the subject that is being portrayed; “we are able to judge man in cosmic terms, scrutinize him through our portholes as through instruments of laboratory.”¹⁹ – summarised Sant-Exupéry from his cockpit. The aeroplane was a scaled-up microscope of a sort. There was a double-game played by the pilot: on the one hand detached from the world, looking at it as if through a porthole; on the other, realising that among the clouds he was not in an exterior but within a rarefied surrounding interior. This enabled the pilot to trace a fluid movement between what was inside and outside, and also what was up and down.

The straight lines of the landing field moving towards infinity seem to be the ultimate achievement of perspectival vanishing point; however, once taken off, the landscape is understood as a map itself, more than a picturesque construction. If the pilot continues his journey upwards, when navigating through the cumulus, the plane emerges into a different landscape, the clouds transfigured into topography. Traditionally the celestial territory has been associated with ‘a sea of clouds’. However, the softness of its outline and the instability of its forms brought some aviators/photographers to associate it with the desert-scape (Fig.9). This visual connection is most evident in the work of Antoine Poidebard who, since 1925, developed photographic surveys of the Roman archaeological sites in Syria and Lebanon from his Potez 25TOE, while he was taking pictures of cloudscapes²⁰. This model introduced in 1925 allowed him a wider visibility from the backseat from which he was shooting as it was a sesquiplane – a biplane in which the length of the lower wing was reduced. In his *Nuages au dessus de Tyr* [*Clouds above Tyr*] (Fig.10a) the upper wing occupies the top right corner of the photograph, leaving the cloud system to merge with the ground in the lower part. In *Chaîne Nord-palmyrène* [*Chain in North-Palmyra*] (Fig.10b) the sequence of soft mountain chains



Fig. 11- Kádár, Ladislav, *Looking north over a dune-line from the plateau of the Gifl Kebir in A Study of the Sand Sea in the Libyan Desert in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934), pp. 476c

mirrors the patterns of clouds in the sky above, blurring the horizon that finally in *Vue du Quargia in Salah (Sahara)* (Fig.10c) disappears in a diving view over the dunes.

However, regardless of the oddity of the space and its lack of easy Cartesian systematisation, it was indeed treated as an object of scientific inquiry. As the British scientist Reverend Clement Ley found determinant, clouds could not simply be taken indoors to be scrutinised²¹. But indeed, they could be fixed on a paper and be taken to the developing lab. If that was the case with clouds, could not the moving sandstorms be captured in pocket objects and the vanishing mirages on materialised plates to take home?

Frame 3: Shifting Grounds

Precisely the “scientific” discussion that evening at the RGS closed with a presentation on how science was trying to capture the moving sands. It was titled ‘A Study of the Sand Sea in the Libyan Desert’; but in fact, it was a sort of response to Orde Wingate’s results in his expedition to Zerzura. The contradiction was not, though, in the failure of finding the elusive city, but in the observations he published after his return regarding dune formation. The northern limit of the Gulf Kebir is loosely defined by the Great Sand Sea, an enormous expanse of dunes ranging from a couple of hundred metres to 140 km long (Fig. 11). Despite the given name, it is more like an island than a sea, in the sense of being an oddity within the North African deserts. Its exception lies in that, contrary to the normal way in which dunes form, the belts develop in NNW by SSE direction following the course of the prevailing winds. This situation doesn’t happen anywhere else in the world, except for certain areas of the Sinai desert. While looking for Zerzura by camel, Wingate missed seeing which way the wind blew. Or, at least, his meteorological chart was not that accurate²². An argument that was central to the closing presentation at the RGS.

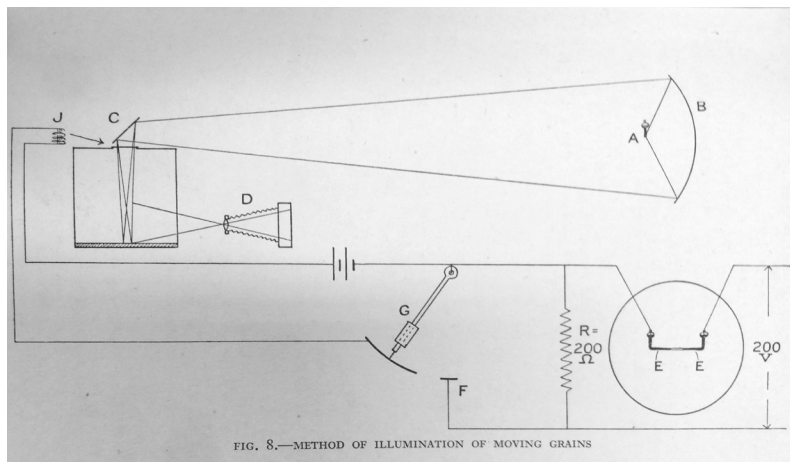
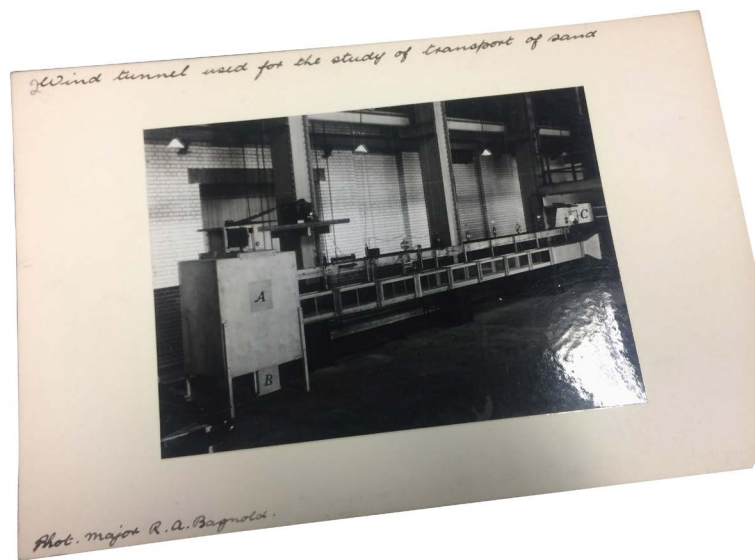


Fig. 12- Bagnold, Ralph A. *Wind Tunnel used for the study of transport of sand*. No dated. rgs052614. ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 13- Bagnold, Ralph A. *Method of Illumination of Moving Grains* in Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941

Regardless of the polemic, what draws one's attention is the fact that these dunes of special kind were only baptised within the last five years. All the previous accounts of their existence were discredited as myths²³ – not at the level of Zerzura, but definitely with less access to the scientific realms. It was Ralph Bagnold – the one we found competing with Penderel – who gave the name to them as *seifs*²⁴. His credibility had been more than proved by his career, dedicated to the geological research of the Libyan desert. This, however, was not in contradiction to his involvement in the quest for Zerzura. The one was feeding the other. As he put it:

“As a boy I had been excited by H.G. Wells's romances in science fiction, then only recently published. They stimulated me with the idea that there were new, unimagined things still to be discovered. (...) The geographical explorations that I organised in Egypt and Sudan were a first consequence. There might be something previously unknown just over the next horizon, not only in the geographical sense but much more generally.”²⁵

Bagnold eventually became the one who more clearly drew connections between scientific knowledge and the fantasies of the desert.

If the problem of nephology was to bring the object of research to the interior, topographical research developed their minds in reverse. They argued for the North Africa deserts as a space – despite its extreme conditions – somehow more convenient for experimentation, paradoxically making of it a ‘scientific interior’. Commenting on his research on the movement of sand, Bagnold pointed out: “Here, where there existed no animals, vegetation, or rain to interfere with sand movements, the dunes seemed to behave like living things.” In effect, well before the Americans transformed their deserts into out-of-scale laboratories – test-sites, moon-landing simulacra, high-speed evaluation, artistic experimentation, etc. – through Bagnold, the Sahara took the form of ‘controlled environment’ for his studies in *The Physics of Blown Sand and Desert Dunes* (1941). The book supposed a breakthrough in the understanding of the movement of sand;

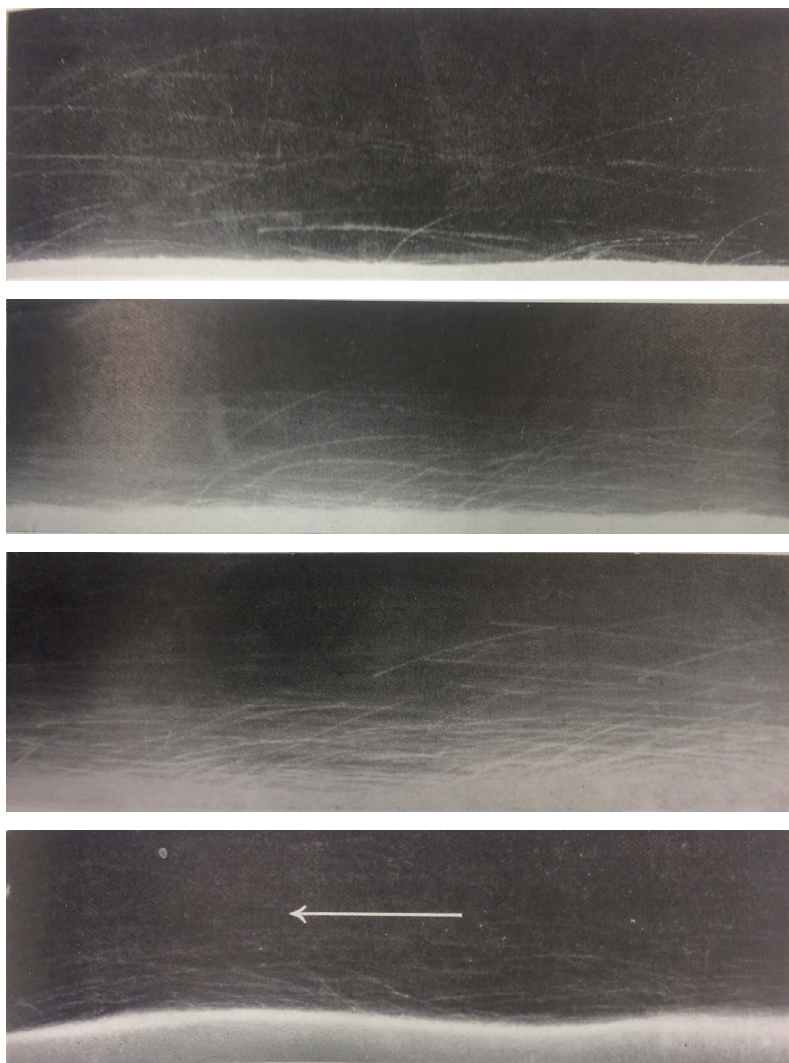
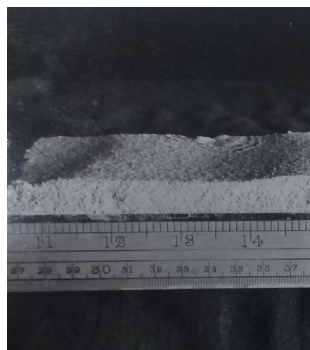
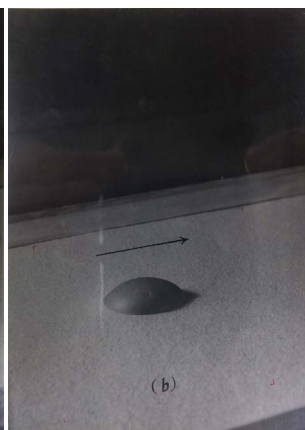
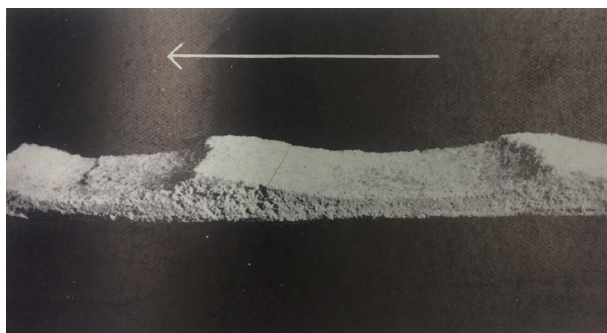


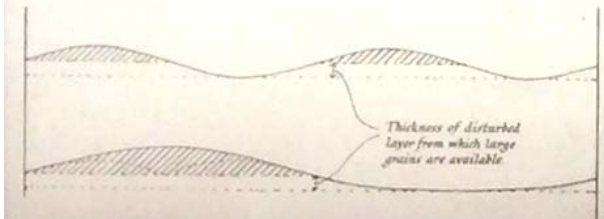
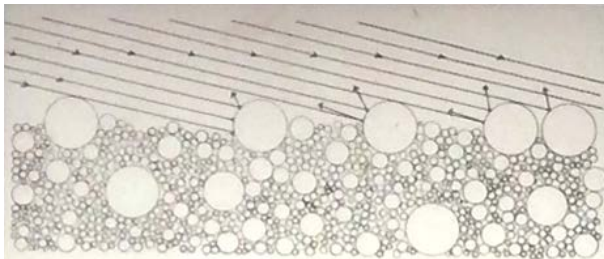
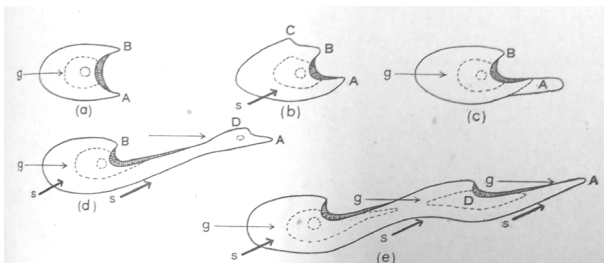
Fig. 14- Bagnold, Ralph A. *Photographs of Grain Paths* in Bagnold,
Ralph A. 1941

and it has remained a classic of a sort among ‘sand-tist’, helping the understanding of unstable desert territories, even to the point of having recently been used by NASA for the geographical investigation of the landscapes on Mars – naming a Martian dune-range after him. Bagnold – engineer from the University of Cambridge – was one of the most active cartographers in the Libyan desert throughout the interwar period. Collaborating frequently with the Geological Survey of Egypt, directed by the geologist Dr. John Ball (1872-1941), Bagnold became one of the main characters in the strategic trace of the border between Egypt and Libya.

However, his field work in the exterior ‘desert-lab’ was mirrored by a parallel ‘interior desert’. In a way, his fascination with sandstorms, ripples, dunes, and sand seas was scientifically not that far from aviation’s aerodynamics. His question was very simple: “what kind of upward physical force must be exerted on the mineral grains to make them rise against the force of gravity, lifting them to such a height that they can strike one’s face like little hammers?”²⁶ In the question there’s implied the macro-scale of sandstorms, but also the micro-scale of mineral grains. Starting with ad hoc experiments in his father’s little workshop in Shooters Hill, South London, his research took him to build a special wind tunnel at Imperial College, London²⁷ in which he carried out more accurate experiments in 1935-1936²⁸. The tunnel consisted of a long shaft of 1 foot sq. section in which the glass side walls enabled observation. The air flowed through a fan (Fig. 12, letter B) with a controlled speed²⁹. Bagnold designed a series of narrow longitudinal slots in the roof of the tunnel that allowed him to introduce intense beams of light so that, when looking through the side glass of the tunnel, only a single strip of sand shining vividly was seen. This way, he was able to focus on specific particles and photograph their movement (Fig. 13). The pictures captured illustrated the motion of the grains as a sort of version of Marey’s chronophotographs (Fig.14). In them the scientist could still trace the movement of one particular particle despite the increasing level of noise cause by the wind. Over the surface of the printed image, Bagnold drew arrows

229





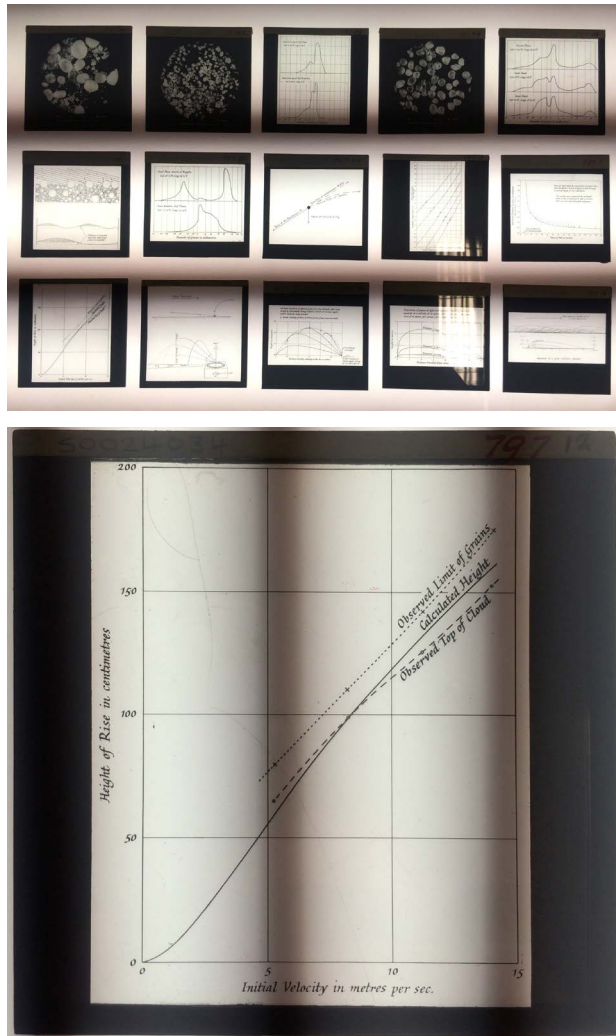


Fig. 16- Bagnold, Ralph A.

- a. *The movement of desert sand* (series of lantern slides). rgs235097.
- b. Slide S0024034(797-12). ©Royal Geographical Society

and letters that signified the complex order within the apparent chaos. Once the wind was set still in the tunnel the sand settled in wavy patterns (Fig. 15, a). The sedimented formations were then measured. With the introduction of rulers for measuring the length of the dune-waves, photographs become an ambiguous perception of an oblique, almost aerial photograph of a desert; and, then, the knowledge that that desert is in fact a miniature (Fig. 15, b). These were later translated into charts, either by drawing the mutations in shape or in abstract numbers for statistical charts (Fig. 15, c). In this peculiar laboratory process the research moved in a continuum from the macro-scale of “dunes behaving like living things” to the microscopic grains of sand. His presentations at the RGS have something of that seamless shifting of scales: from siliceous particles to continental maps and to scientific graphs (Fig. 16, a). The journey through the slides was not that much into the deserts of North Africa, but more like a travelogue in one single desert that was interior and exterior at the same time; micro and macro.

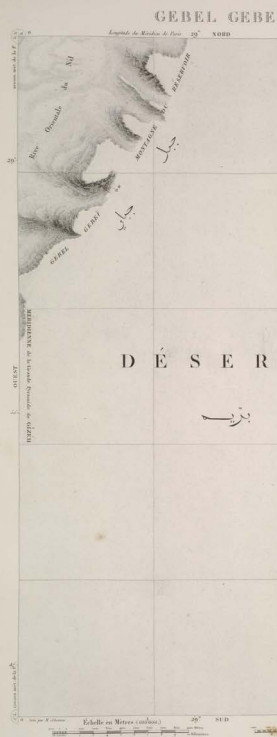
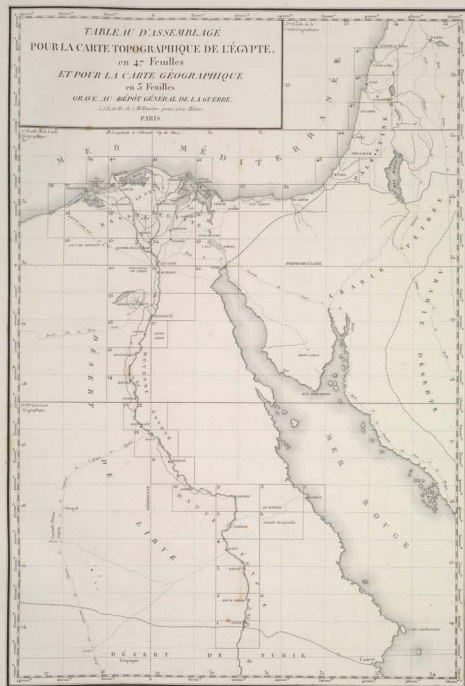
Even the scientific graphs seem to be playing the ambiguity and becoming maps of the desert in a more conventional way (Fig. 16, b). The grid of vertical velocity locates the grains in increasing horizontal height as the function evolves. But this two-dimensional method of location was not that far from previous attempts at mapping the desert, not only in a graphical sense, but more as a conceptual one. Arguably the first attempt of scientific mapping of the desert happened with the atlas of the *Description de l’Egypte*. The opening map of the index establishes a clear grid over the river, to which subsequent maps in the volume zoom in. The scaling-in process is clear and is radically applied to the whole project. There are beautifully detailed maps of Cairo, Thebes, and Alexandria. But, basically, for the French cartographers, beyond the east and west banks of the Nile there was nothing to be mapped. At the moments in which the river takes a detour from its South-North main direction, whole areas of uncharted desert appear. This implies that their radical methodology, somehow, begins to clash with the cartographic endeavour having to produce maps that

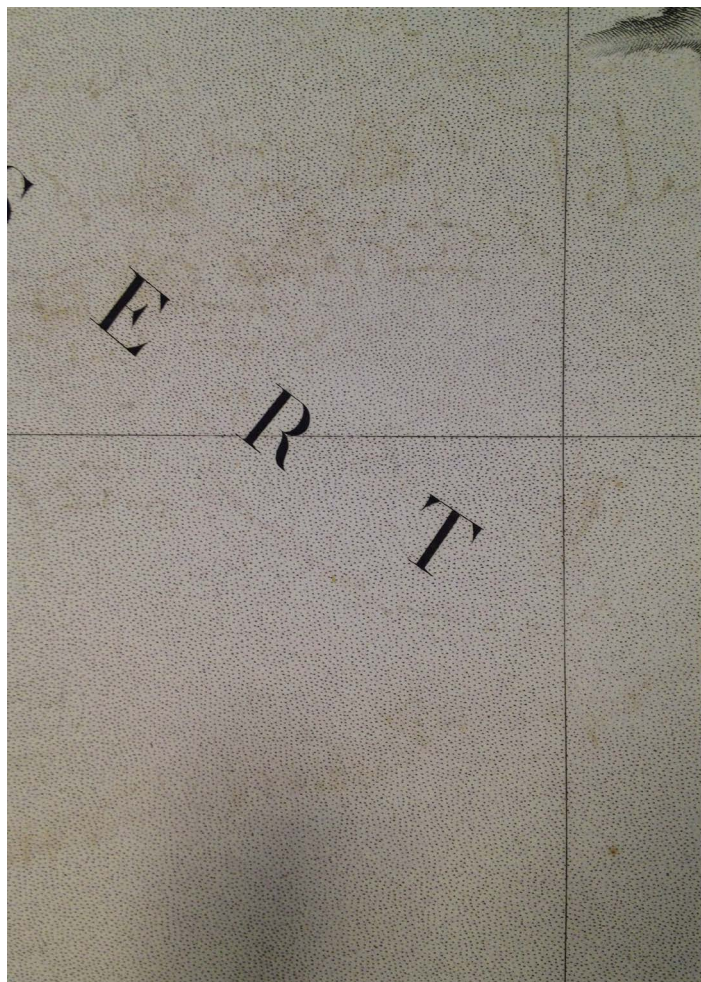
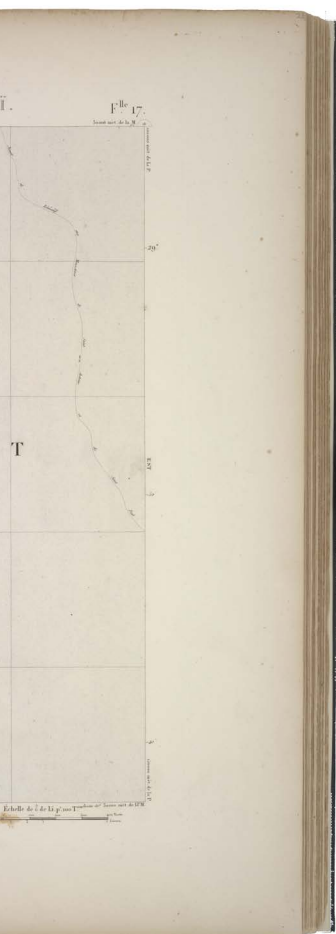
(previous page)Fig. 15- Bagnold, Ralph A.

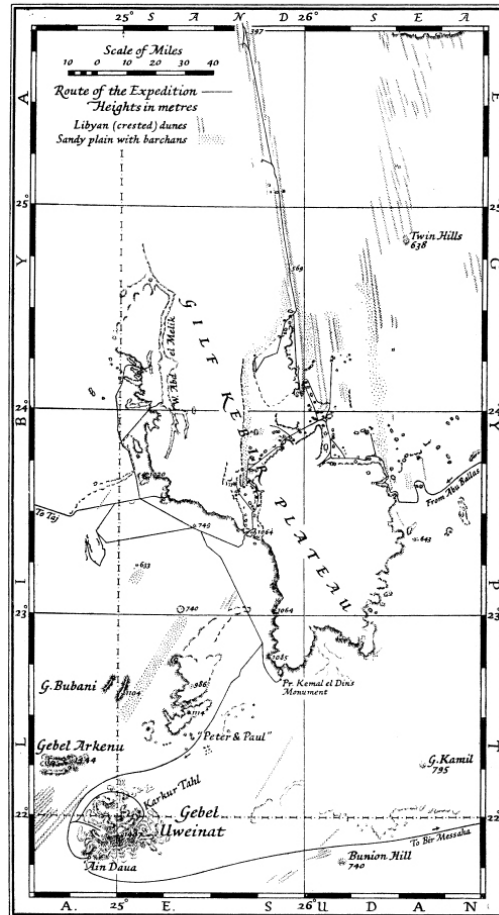
a. *Ridges produced in the wind tunnel in* Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941 & *Examples to illustrate the transport of sand by wind* (rgs052616 & rgs052615) ©Royal Geographical Society

b. *Ripples formed in very fine sand in* Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941 & *Examples to illustrate the transport of sand by wind* (rgs052617 & rgs052618)

c. *Transition from Barchan to Seif dune form due to bi-directional wind in* Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941.







Part of the Libyan Desert in the neighbourhood of the Gilf Kebir Plateau and Gebel 'Uweinat

Fig. 18- Penderel, H.W.G.J. *Part of the Libyan Desert(...)* in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934), p. 450

illustrate simply empty desert land. This paradox, however, gave room to a series of beautiful maps in which only the rough sandy hatch and the parallels-and-meridian reference grid populate the vacant chart engraved with the title 'Desert' (Fig. 17). Certainly, Bagnold's investigations promised to reach somewhere beyond the Napoleonic cartographers' attempt.

Frame 4: Mapping the Desert

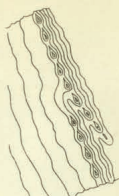
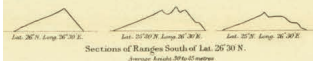
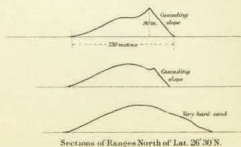
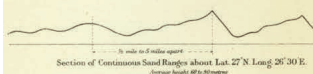
Further than the vacant charts of the *Description*, the maps of the Libyan desert produced by the cartographers of the RGS illustrated something more. In attempts previous to the photographs of Penderel, the charts of that region were defined by two main features: the Gilf Kebir, of which they only knew the peripheral limits but no interior content; and, to its north, the loose depiction of the Great Sand Sea. Whilst the impenetrable wall of the Gilf is legibly marked as a thick rocky line on a map of his previous expedition (Fig. 18), for Penderel the Sand Sea was difficult to draw. Its presence is just marked by a loose cloud-of-dots hatch and a zigzagging vector indicating the direction of the crested dunes. Delimiting its precise location was elusive. It just simply didn't have a defined boundary necessary for its charting. It is true that these imprecise patches populating the chart did have something to do with the scale of that particular chart, constrained by the fact that it was published in the journal of the RGS – of reduced dimensions. However, a larger version of the territory didn't allow for much more precision. This is the case in the beautiful unfolding map that Bagnold used for illustrating his article about the journey in the area in 1929 and 1930 (Fig. 19) While graphically appealing, it doesn't give much more geographical information than the actual route they followed. Traced about four years before Penderel's, it even misses completing the Western line that encloses the Gilf Kebir. Most of the chart is either empty land, or land occupied by the nomenclature and reference charts. In the note populating the void it indicates:

(previous page)Fig.
17- *Description de
L'Égypte*. 1809-1828.
© New York Public
Library

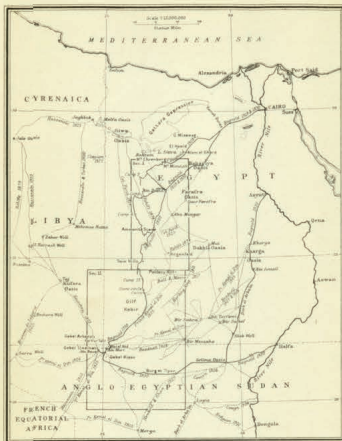
a. *Tableau
d'assemblage pour la
carte topographique de
l'Égypte...*

b. Gebel Gebei
[Jebel Jebel]

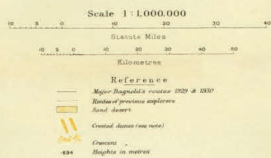
c. Detail of desert
hatch



Typical gap in crest chain of Northern Sand Ranges



EGYPT THE LIBYAN DESERT Showing the Routes of Major R.A. Bagnold's Expeditions 1929 & 1930 With those of previous Explorers



SECTION II



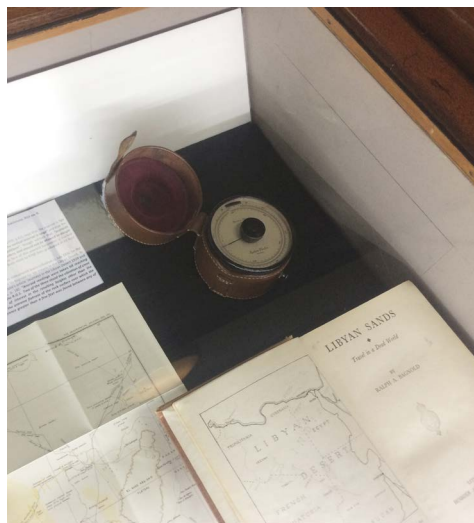
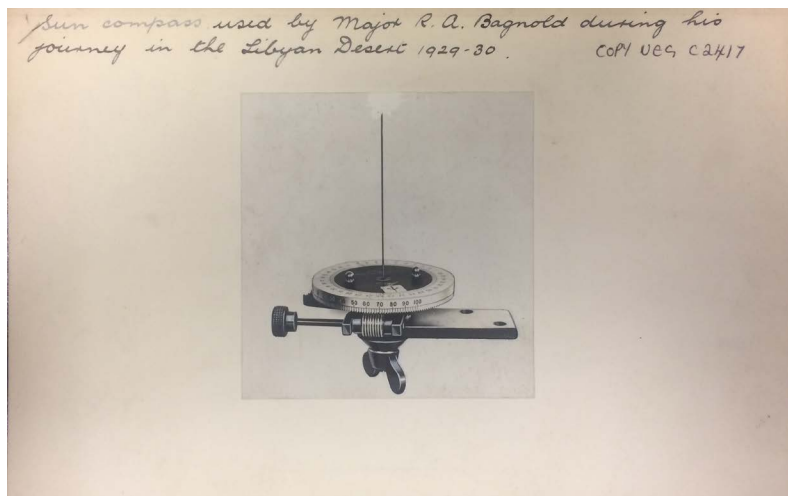


Fig. 20- *Sun Compass used by Major R.A. Bagnold during his journey in the Libyan Desert 1929-30.* ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 21- *Bagnold's Three inch Paulin altimeter made in Sweden by C.E. Johansson of Eskilstuna at the Royal Geographical Society.* Photographs by the author.

“Only crested dunes, presenting the more serious difficulties to crossing are shown, and intervening spaces, particularly north of the Lat. 26°, contain crestless whaleback dunes not shown on the map. Astronomical positions with no initials were determined by Major Bagnold’s expeditions; those of previous explorers are shown (...) For further information on the construction of this map see Appendix I of Major Bagnold’s paper in the ‘Geographical Journal’ for December 1931.”³⁰

(previous page)
Fig. 19- Bagnold, Ralph. *The Libyan Desert. Showing the routes of Major R.A. Bagnold’s Expeditions 1929 & 1930 With those of previous Explorers* in Bagnold, R.A., Dec., 1931, p. 535b.

The map basically gathers together, not only Bagnold’s route, but other explorers’. It becomes a palimpsest of dots and trajectories. As the note indicates, reading the appendix in the article clarifies the process of its production. There, it is indicated that their major advantage with regards to the previous explorers is not only that they were moving by car, not by camel; but rather that, attached to the dashboard, they were carrying one of Bagnold’s inventions³¹. It consisted of a modified sun-compass that, attached to the car enabled the tracing of precise itineraries. Magnetic compass simply didn’t work due to the metal of the car interfering with the magnetic field. They needed a slightly less high-tech means. With the sun-compass, not the driver but the co-pilot – ‘navigator’ as Bagnold called the role he was playing – had the main job, being in charge of securing that the shadow cast by the knife-edged needle remained over the desired directional number. The strategy was relatively a classic in desert navigation³². However, Bagnold’s modification brought the introduction of an endless tangent screw that enabled the rotation of the circular plate indicating the direction, so as to be able to recalculate it with regards to the changing azimuth of the sun. Previous versions of the sun-compass needed a halt on the way in order to calibrate it. Bagnold’s secured a smoother non-stop sail over the sand. But, overall, it brought the knowledge of the exact position he was located at a given time. The previous versions only assured that, if you were not to modify the set direction, you were remaining on the preset line. Somehow, prior to Bagnold, the map and the route were previous to the actual excursion. With his sun-dial, only the unknown void framed by the grid preceded.

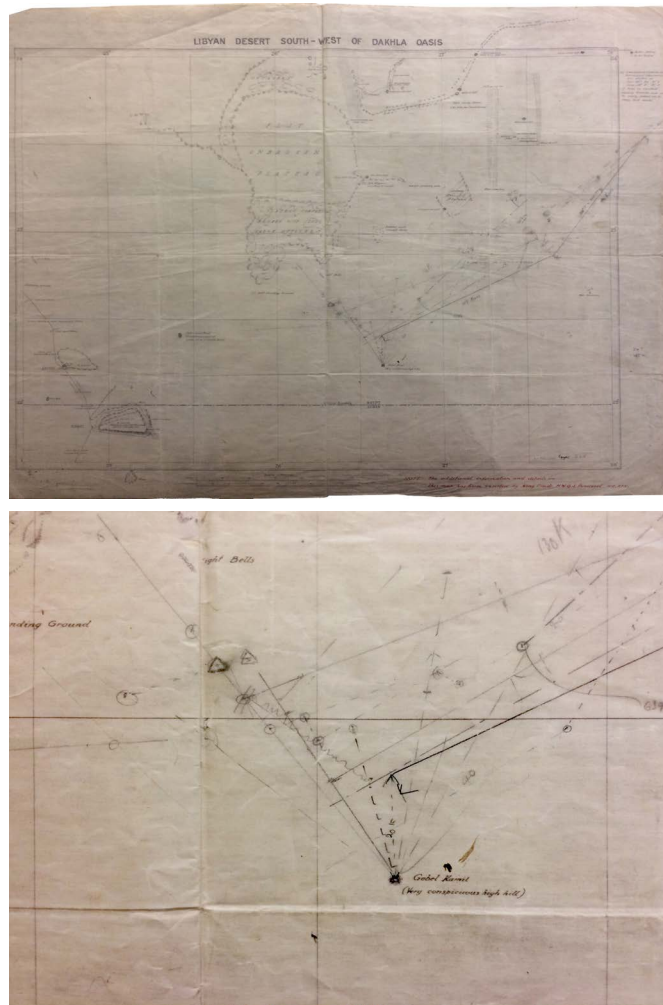
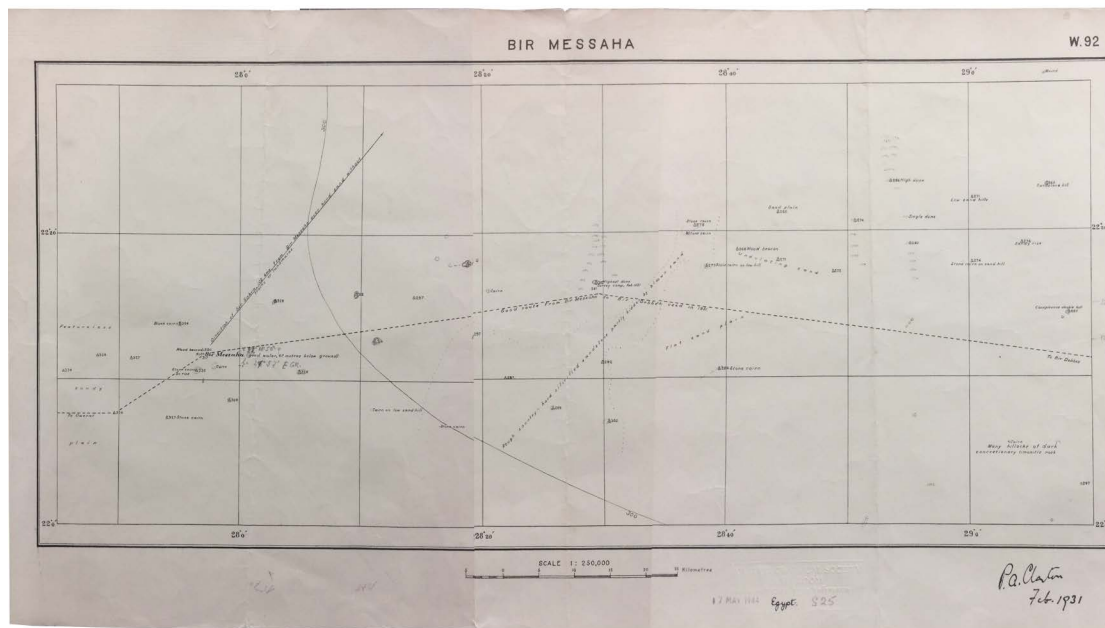
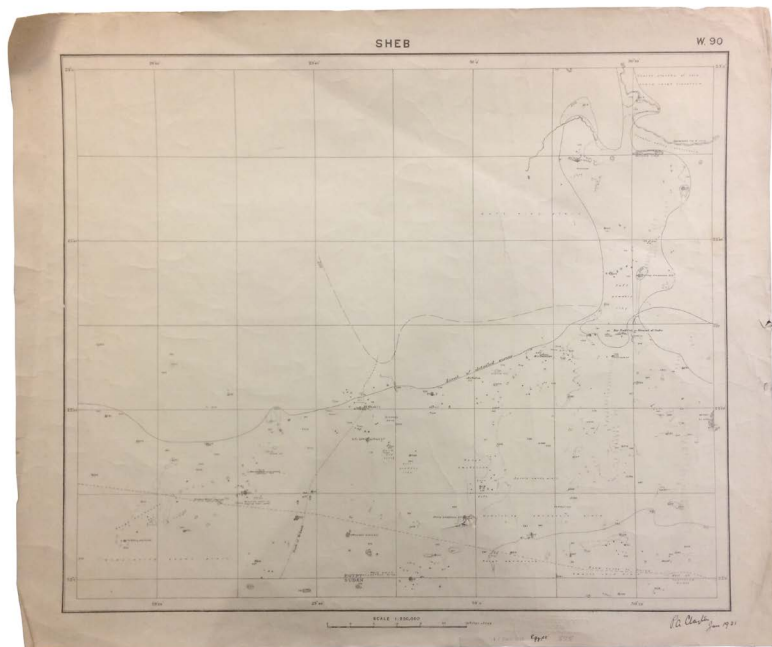


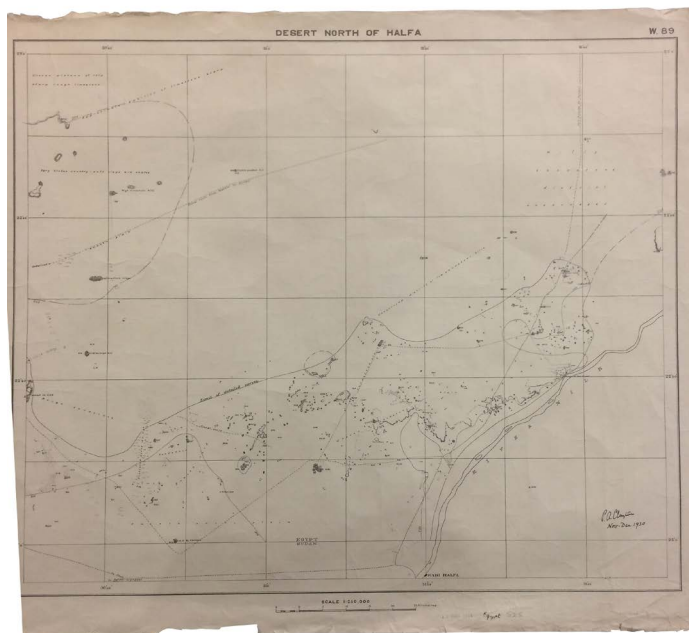
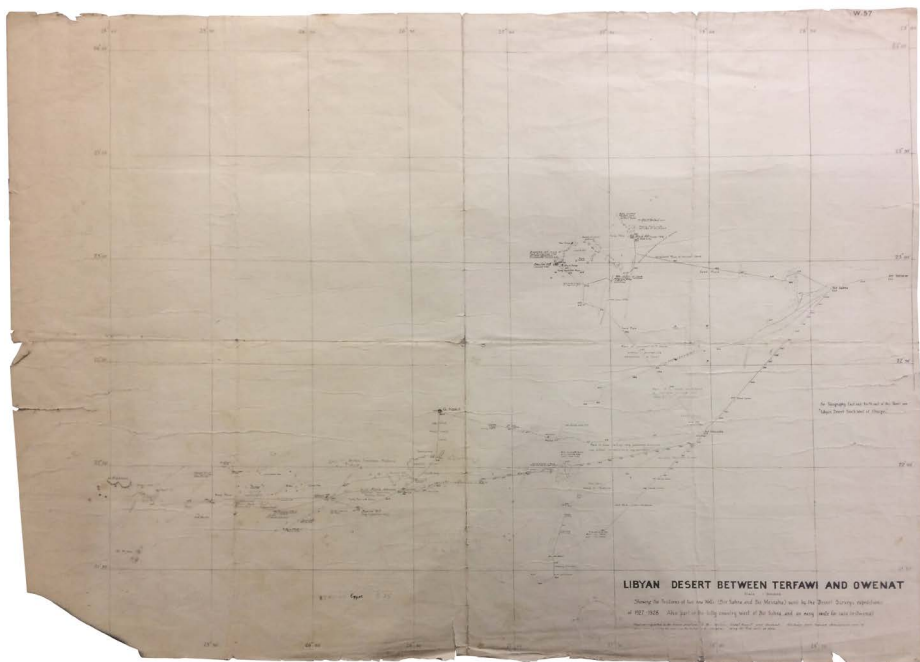
Fig. 22- Desert south-west of Dakhla Oasis; *Svy of Egypt*, 1924(...) Note: The additional information and details on/ this map has been inserted by Wing Comdr. H.W.G. J. Penderel M.C., A.F.C'(b.r.b.b.) in [A collection of maps,... rgs547204 ©Royal Geographical Society

This has been considered Bagnold's major contribution to desert mapping³³. However, it mainly implied a spline curve being traced over the chart. It was simply formed by the relation between movement and the grid of coordinates. To the latitude and altitude, they needed the actual height level of the features they were traversing. For this purpose, he used the more off-the-shelf scientific technology of an altimeter. However, its use was as profitable as the one of his invention – in fact, as opposed to the latter, the altimeter has made its way into the vitrines of the Royal Geographical Society (Fig. 21). It was a three-inch Paulin altimeter made by C.E. Johansson of Eskilstuna, Sweden³⁴. For the measurements to be taken, this time a stop in the journey was needed, so they took advantage of breaks at mid-morning, lunch and upon arrival at the place where they were to camp. These halts are marked in the map as dots on the route with the height written next to it. To check the possible errors, they decided to take as reference the Great Pyramid upon departure and on return³⁵. Somehow, the ancient icon was a more secure anchor point than the unstable technology.

This conjunction between dots of height and lines of trajectory was a way of representation, but also a relevant way to understand the space of the desert with the increasing use of the airplane that implied an added importance of height. The collection of maps held under the name of Penderel in the RGS shows this spatial understanding (Fig. 23-24). Some drawn from scratch over the grid, others using the Desert Survey of Egypt as a base for his pencil annotations, they compose a series of beautiful representations of the desert by means of route lines traversing clouds of points. However, more than in their graphic depiction, their beauty lies in the radicality of taking their logic of mapping to its extreme. The geographers of Egypt, as well as Penderel, used a more traditional cartographic strategy of triangulation, along with the altimeter-based methodology of Bagnold. In some maps like figure 23, the emphasis is not that much on the route, but rather on a recognisable fixed point – mountains tips, rocks or gebels – from which the rays of

(following page)
 Fig. 23-. [*A collection of maps, formerly the property of H. W. G. J. Penderel, with manuscript additions by Penderel, P. A. Clayton and/or László Almásy relating to exploration in the Egyptian Desert, 1932-1934*] rgs547204 © Royal Geographical Society

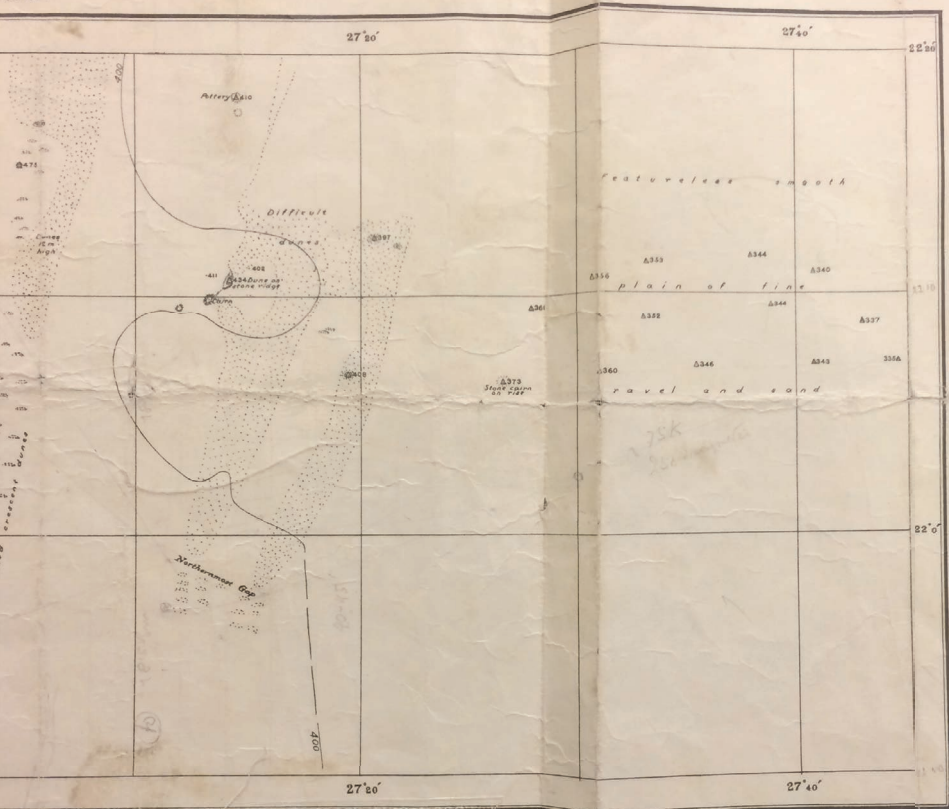




[illegible]

AMIL

W.93



00 10 20 Kilometres

17 MAR 1944 Egypt S25

P.A. Clayton
March 1931

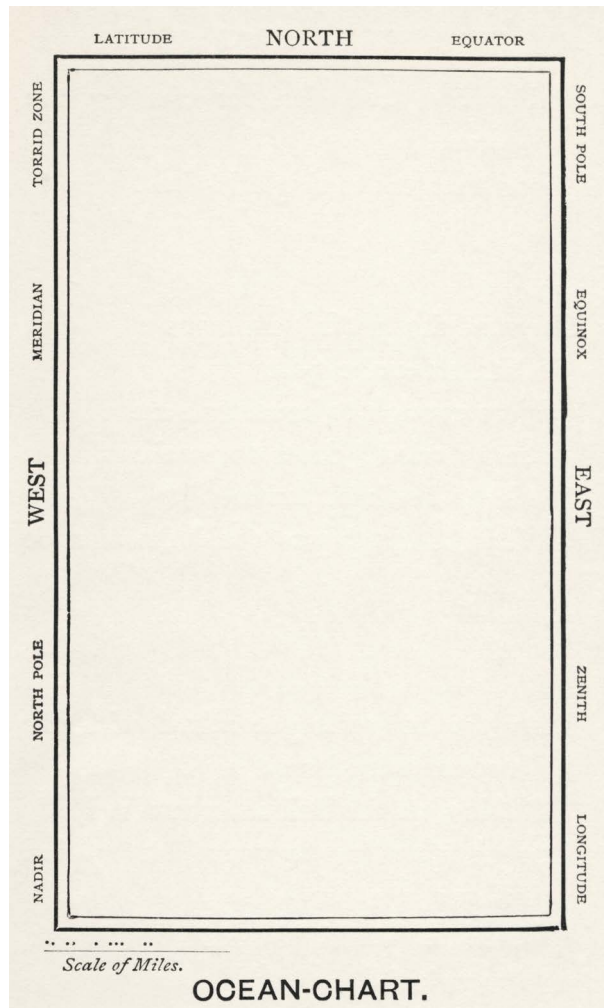


Fig. 25- Holiday, Henry. *Fourth of the original illustrations to "The Hunting of the Snark" by Lewis Carroll. 1876.*

the theodolite radiate measuring others. This strategy of the fixed measuring eye strengthens the moving one of the car and airplane, with complex pencil calculations that appears on the map's margins. Two systems that coexisted in Penderel's maps, and that were the strategy followed by the cartographers of the Libyan Desert³⁶. The complexity of the desert that had evaded its mapping is tackled by total abstraction of a system of positioning space through latitude, altitude and height. It was a moment in which the fluidity of the desert space was accepted in a logic of numerical processing: from the instrument, the measurements were noted down in books, annotated in existing maps and finally translated into charts. They are the culminating point of their cartographic technology taking over.

However, the summit of their technology of vision was the beginning of their downfall. "And when poor hapless Phaethon from the height of highest heaven looked down and saw below, (...) his knees in sudden fear shook, and his eyes were blind with light so bright." In the midst of the scientific achievement of mapping the void, the fiction of Zerzura emerged. Along with the possibility of filling up the chart, there was also the fascination with what still remained blank. The pilot, without an enemy to shoot at now needed an object to portray; it was the mania generated by the promise of finding a city at the centre of the void. There was always an element that endured unmapped.

Penderel's flight – both in its aerial point of view and in the desert becoming a map – signified the apex of cartography. It also reveals that cartography of the desert reached its limits at that point. This liminal moment in which cartography touched both the inner and outer faces of its limit is illustrated in Lewis Carroll's *Bellman's Map* – also known as the *Ocean Chart* (Fig. 25). The map was an illustration for Carroll's poem of a sailing crew eager to hunt the Snark – a possibly dangerous animal that inhabited "an island frequented by the Jubjub and the Bandersnatch – no doubt the very island where the Jabberwock was slain" (in other words, a nonsense). Introduced in the text as a joke, it's a chart betwixt and between; not

(previous page)
Fig. 24-Gebel Kamil,
1:250.000, signed
P.A. Clayton / March
1931'(h.r.b.b) with
MS.(pencil) adds. in
[A collection of maps,
formerley the property of
H. W. G. J. Penderel,
with manuscript
additions by Penderel,
P. A. Clayton and/or
László Almásy relating
to exploration in the
Egyptian Desert, 1932-
1934] rgs547204
- w.93. ©Royal
Geographical
Society

making sense as a map, however fully-fledged as an ocean-chart. It does, indeed, illustrate the a priori of modern cartography: a frame with the compass's directions, and a vacant sector at scale. It is the depiction of the limits of cartography – which, to a certain degree, can hold logic within itself; it is a map that, though abstract, could work as a depiction of the sea. But whose outer face is given by the story as, when the Bellman carefully unfolded it in search of the route, “the crew were much pleased when they found it to be a map they could all understand.” A reaction that remains outside any mapping logic. Leaving aside nonsensical narratives, this cartographic limit was, for example, in Bagnold's sun-compass. The invention was accurate, precise. However, it also had a blind spot. There was one hour during the day when it was unreliable. In Libya, during an hour or more at midday in summer, the shadow cast by the gnomon was too short to reach the graduations in the circular plate, due to the very rapid change of the sun's azimuth³⁷. They were, in a way, outside the map. It was noon, the hour when the sun was at its zenith, and the nadir when technology was beyond its limits. In a similar way, in their maps there was both a mappable space that remained within the grid of coordinates, as well as a space to remain off-the-grid. Zerzura was this second, a void at the centre of the chart.

Frame 5: The vanishing point

Seemingly lacking Zerzura – its focus point – RGS 064937 is an image constructed by its frames. Zerzura is elusive; the frames of the photograph – the airplane, nephology, the laboratory and the charts – were technologies of representation that never fully coped with the desert. They defined circumscriptions, frameworks to lay hold of the desert, but Zerzura remained without. When Penderel's expedition claimed having found the city, Bagnold denied it bluntly arguing that “as long as any part of the world remains uninhabited, Zerzura will be there, still to be discovered.”³⁸ However, rather than an issue of discovering, it was a question of the ‘cover’ itself, of the limits of their

technologies. Zerzura was the possibility of a geographical entity lying beyond the domain of modern cartography.

Patrick Clayton, third competitor in the quest for the lost city, defined Zerzura as “a vanishing point.”³⁹ While this claim was accurate in the sense of being the evasive object of their cartographic mindset, it is also true in the sense of being the intersection of two trajectories: a colonialist project and a Romantic one. To the first one, the critique writes that their project was developed in the unmapped border area between Egypt, Libya and Sudan in an effort to take control over the land. For this argument, though buried, the city was a bait or a cover for a ‘hidden’ colonial agenda. Zerzura was to be then a mechanism of ‘disclosing horizons’, of the colonial mapping gaining power over the unknown territory. For the second trajectory, Zerzura was the object of exotic allure; a Romantic element that sneaked in the cartographers’ plans. Their scientific articles in *The Geographical Journal* were counterbalanced by biographical accounts of their trips. The latter followed the tradition of nineteenth century literary exoticism in the desert rather than the highly academic standard of scientific journals. In 1935, Bagnold published his *Libyan Sands*⁴⁰; an account that delves into the experience of the journeys, something that was left aside in the meticulous but severe language of his geographical publications. A 16mm cine reel is also kept in the archives of the RGS documenting Bagnold’s journeys between 1929 and 1930. It is an amateur silent film in which each expedition is introduced by intertitles followed by a hand tracing the route on the map (Fig. 26). As the intertitle chart helped the silent story to unfold, the outline traced over the map helped the viewer to locate himself in the repetitive scenes of omnipresent sand the explorers traversed. However, in their journeys there was this tension between being situated and dislocated. There was not only the desire to be geographically fixed in the coordinates of the map. There was also the fascination with moving off-the-grid. “We were free again to go anywhere we pleased, away from roads and hedges, from flies and traffic, with that happy sense of being the only things alive.”⁴¹ The saturated shots of sand dunes become even more rarefied when

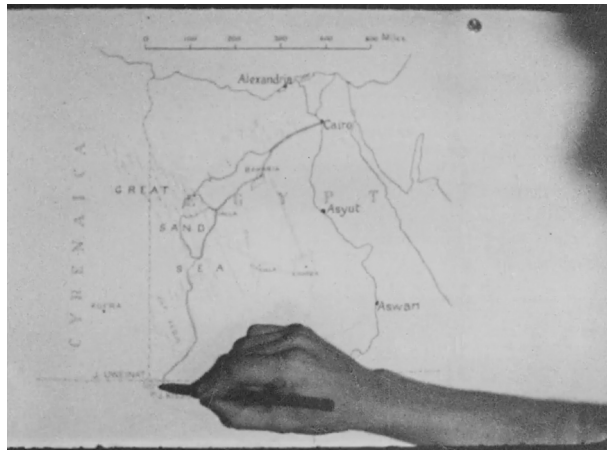
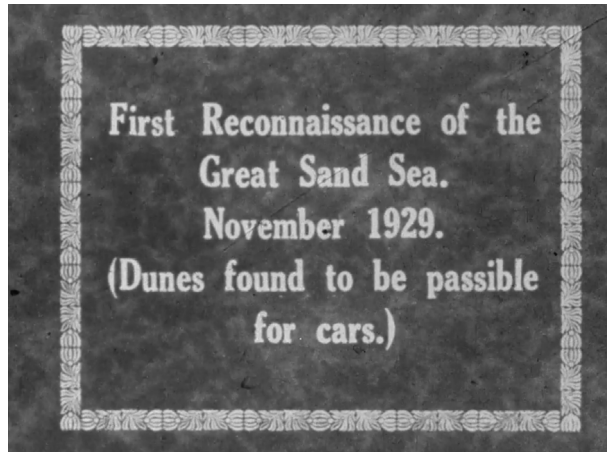


Fig. 26- Screenshots from Bagnold, Ralph A. *Libyan desert journeys from the 1930s*. 1 reel of 16mm cine film (49:11 mins.) : mute, b/w. 1930. K233963. ©Royal Geographical Society

seeing their cars weaving their way off-the-beaten track through them or the members of the expedition sliding down their slope as if it was snow (Fig. 27). The previous year the Austrian filmmaker Rudi Mayer documented the journey of Count Lázsló Almásy – organiser of Penderel’s expedition – in his *Durch Afrika im Automobil* ⁴². If Bagnold’s film showed the excitement about moving outside Western conventions, Almásy’s film has the feeling of a fantasy/documentary in which, along with the exploration scenes, more fictional interventions are introduced: a low-budget god Neptune takes over the ship where they navigate, or a group of explorers disguised as natives organise a line-crossing ceremony throwing people to an improvised pool in which even the camera man ends up hurled (Fig. 28). Almásy, as Bagnold did, published his travelogue *Az ismeretlen Szahara* [Unknown Sahara]⁴³, also in 1935. Nevertheless, of the two, Almásy has been indeed the more romanticised explorer of Zerzura, at least in his ‘cinematographic’ career. His life was the base character in *Rommel ruft Kairo* [Rommel Calls Cairo](1959) and *Foxhole in Cairo* (1960), culminating his filmography with the award-winning *The English Patient* (1996). Especially in this last – adaptation of Michael Ondaatje’s homonymous book – Almásy appears as a romanticised explorer. While Ondaatje’s metonym opening the book with an unrecognisable character – later revealed that is Almásy – severely burnt after a plane crash, his own skin embedding the uncharted desert, the book doesn’t delve into his cartographic mindset, but rather in a nineteenth century desert explorer tradition.

While neither fully colonialist, nor fully Romantic, Zerzura has escaped these two trajectories of historical analysis of the cartographers of the RGS. It is the point where these two assessments vanish.

When I found RGS 064937 it seemed to me highly paradoxical that the cartographers, who were mapping such a precise line as the border, were to make use of such an elusive object as Zerzura. Scratching its surface, it stopped being paradoxical. Framing RGS 064937, placing it in its context as a Barthesian encyclopedic object placed in its

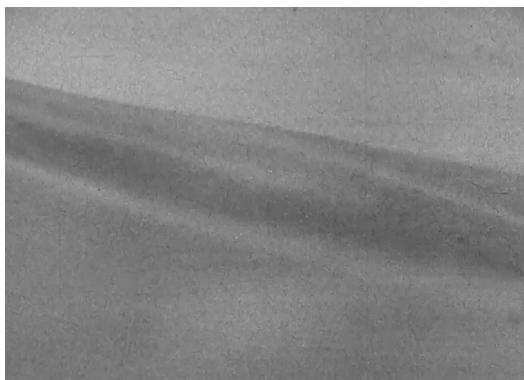
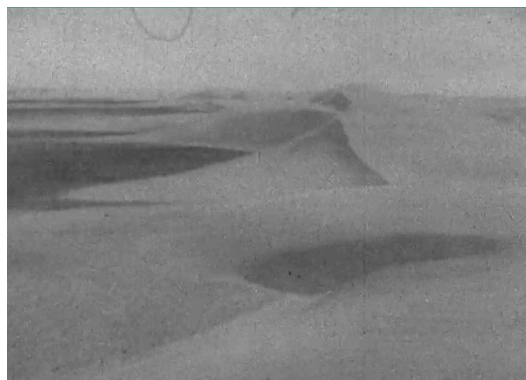






Fig. 28- Screenshots from Mayer, Rudi. *Durch Afrika im Automobil*. 1929.

vignette, actually shakes the construction of the colonial vignette. It makes reconsidering the post-colonial revision of Colonialism not only in terms of power struggle gained by modern science. While neither fully colonialist, nor fully Romantic, Zerzura has escaped these two trajectories of historical analysis. It is the point where these two assessments vanish. Lying in between, Zerzura is both the void in the centre of their maps and the outer edge of the limits of modern cartography. And precisely for that, it is the element that holds the cartographic project together. RGS 064937 synthesises the moment in which the technology of vision of the airplane reached its limits. However, the fact of acknowledging there was something beyond, justified the possibility of its appropriation. The myth was not external to the modern mindset and opposed to it; the myth was the very tool through which the exterior was appropriated. Rather than an element excluded from the techno-scientific endeavor, Zerzura shows that the highly fictional was a key element for the highly scientific. Zerzura, if a myth, it is only in the Barthesian modern sense. Finally, Zerzura is vanishing point for the characters of this research in that from it something emerged: the possibility of a counter-metropolis. There could be a city beyond the modern logic. Penderel remained at its gates.

(previous page) Fig. 27- Screenshots from Bagnold, Ralph A. *Libyan desert journeys from the 1930s*. 1 reel of 16mm cine film (49:11 mins.) : mute, b/w. 1930. K233963. ©Royal Geographical Society

Endnotes

1. Barthes, Roland. 2000[1980], p. 27.
 2. *ibid.*, p. 9.
 3. *ibid.*, p. 28.
 4. cf. Barthes, Roland. *The Plates of the Encyclopedia in New Critical Essays*. Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press. 2009. p. 30.
- Here, as Roland Barthes does, I use the term *tableau vivant* to describe the vignette, or upper part of Diderot's plates in which the objects are shown in context. *Ibid.*, p. 24 & 30.
5. *ibid.*
 6. Nietzsche, F. "On the Spirit of Gravity" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. 2009. Harmondsworth, Penguin. p. 304

7. The culmination of that narrative was reached with the pictures of the Earth from outside its orbit, the photographs of the Apollo project – the name of the enterprise reenacting the myth – that triggers the questioning of Cosgrove. Departing from that photographs, Anselm Franke has argued that the images taken from *Apollo 8* pose the question of the “disappearance of the outside” to the system of European Modernity. The process of internalising is interestingly illustrated by Penderel’s shot in that it is precisely the desert which is being photographed. In the nineteenth century, the deserts of North Africa still constituted an exterior to Modernity. The twentieth century brought time of capturing that exteriors.

However, it is only paradoxical that an attempt was made to appropriate the iconic image of *Earthrise* by the American counterculture of the late ‘60s, finding it, as it were, a justification for their search of ‘an exterior’ to Western Modernity. This paradox is seen in Cosgrove who argues that, the photographs of Apollo – with its historical context, its content, the conditions of its production and reproduction – has given support to two contrasting discourses: the one of the *One-World* – one in which “a geopolitical conception coeval with the European and Christian sense of imperium (...) signifies the expansion of a specific socio-economic order across the planet” – and the one of Whole-earth – “an environmentalist conception that appeals to the organic and spiritual unity of terrestrial life (...)draw[ing](...) toward a transcendental vitalism as a basis for universal order and harmony.” However, Franke traces back the context in which the image was reproduced in order to unfold how the American counterculture in the West coast was intertwined in the reproduction of the icon, connecting the discourses that Cosgrove counterposed. In Franke, there is *one* single universalistic discourse that shifts the geopolitical condition after the Whole-earth imaginary, “which did not result in the end of colonial capitalist modernity but created the conditions of its endured continuity.” (Franke, Anselm. *Earthrise and the Disappearance of the Outside*. in *The Whole Earth. California and the Disappearance of the Outside*. Berlin, Stenberg Press. 2013. p. 13.) It is the construction of an outside previous to its internalisation, the exclusion to be colonised, that was always a paradoxical mechanism, and finally is reversed with the Apollonian photographs, producing the ultimate, immanent planetary interior. There, the new condition is the climax of the mechanism of internalisation in which, now, “all the antagonisms, borders, and conflicts ‘down below’ fade into the background, and with them history and its contradictions and struggles”, negating any exterior that could disclaim the validity of the image. Penderel’s shot would be simply the dawn in the process of Apollo’s rise.

Fighting, against all odds, to find an exterior to the imperial view of Apollo, Cosgrove and Franke opt to de-mythicise the image. If the

Apollo photographs unfold a narrative of one vision in which any outside discourse is excluded, both Cosgrove and Franke trace the history of the image trying to locate their historical construction against Apollo's claim of universalism. Cosgrove focuses on the long history of the Apollonian view and its connection to imperialist projects. Franke directs his view towards a closer history of Californian context in the late-1960s. However, a much more straightforward way of de-mythicising Apollo is just to substitute him for another myth.

8. Cosgrove, Denis. "Contested Global Visions: One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs" in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (Jun., 1994), pp. 272.

9. Percy Cox, H. E., J. L. Myres, Miss Caton-Thompson, F. L. Griffith, Orde Wingate and Richard A. Bermann. *Historic Problems of the Libyan Desert: Discussion in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934), pp. 464.

10. Penderel, H. W. G. J. *The Gilf Kebir in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934), pp. 449-456.

11. Bermann, Richard A. *Historic Problems of the Libyan Desert in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934), pp. 456-457.

12. cf. the archives of Charles Barry's journey to Egypt in the Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.

13. cf. Euripides. *Fragments: Oedipus-Chrysippus. Other Fragments*. 1994-. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press. pp. 326-368.

14. Ovid. *Metamorphoses* 2. 246.

15. F. J. R. R., *A Reconnaissance of the Gilf Kebir by the Late Sir Robert Clayton East Clayton in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (Mar., 1933), p. 254.

16. Notes of Robert Clayton-East-Clayton's diary of the journey in *ibid.*, p. 252.

17. cf. Völter, Helmut (translated Simon Cowper) *Cloud Studies*. Leipzig, Spector Books. 2011. p.59.

18. Wölfflin, Heinrich. *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. Kathrin Simon, London, 1964. pp.64-65.

19. Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *Wind, Sand and Stars*. New York, Reynal & Hitchcock. 1939. p. 99.

20. cf. Denise, Fabrice et al. *Une Aventure Archéologique: Antoine Poidebard, photographe et aviateur*. 2004. Parenthèses Ed.

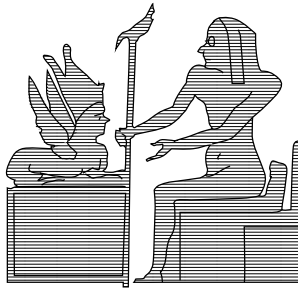
21. cf. *ibid.* p.56.

22. cf. Beadnell, H. J. L. *Libyan Desert Dunes in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 84, No. 4 (Oct., 1934), pp. 337-340

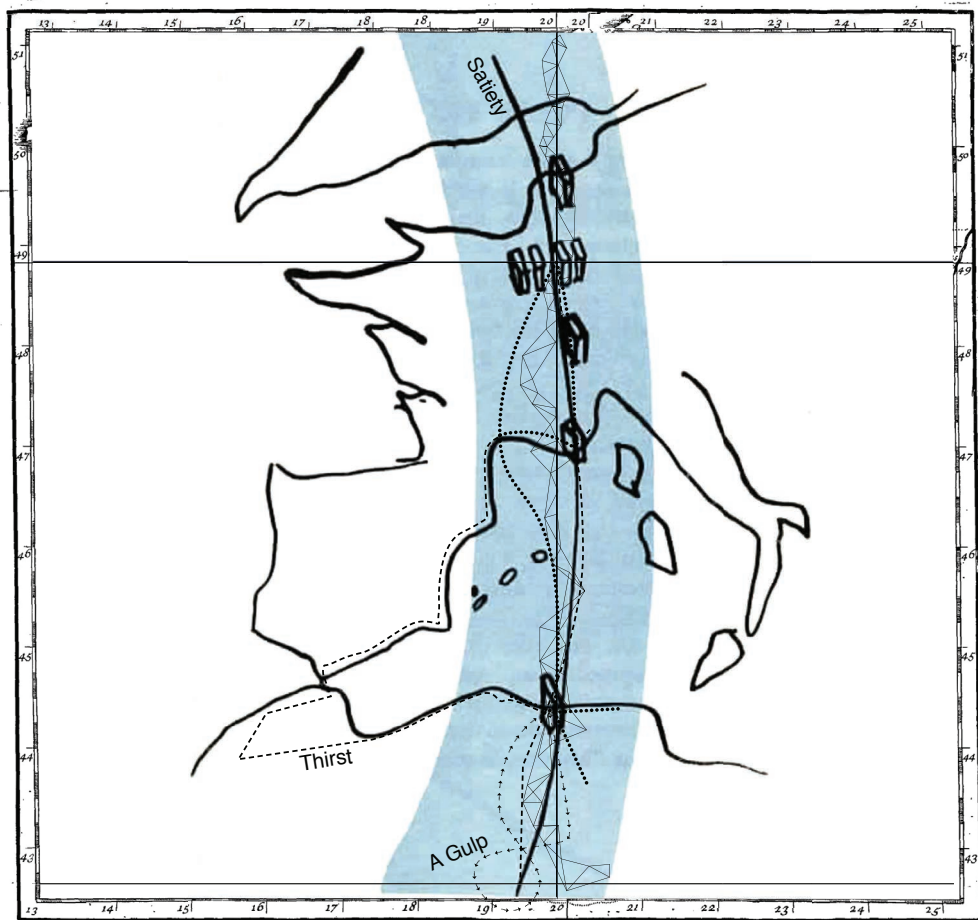
23. In the previous century, Friedrich Gerhard Rohlfs had already affirmed their existence. cf. Kádár, Ladislav. *A Study of the Sand Sea in the Libyan Desert* in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (, 1934), p. 472.
24. *ibid.*, p. 471.
25. Bagnold, Ralph A. *Sand, Wind, and War*. 1990. Tucson, Arizona. The University of Arizona Press. p. 103.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
27. cf. *ibid.*
28. Bagnold, Ralph A. *The Physics of Blown Sand and Desert Dunes*. 1941. London. Methuen & Co. p. 104. xix.
29. For a detailed description of the equipment, cf. chapter 3: *Wind-Tunnel observations* in *ibid.* pp. 25-37.
30. Bagnold, R.A. & Harding King, W. J. *Journeys in the Libyan Desert 1929 and 1930* in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 78, No. 6 (Dec., 1931), p. 535b.
31. *ibid.* pp. 526 & 529.
32. The sun-compass as means of tracing directions in the desert had mainly been used during the First World War. cf. *ibid.* p. 529.
33. cf. Gross, Kuno. *The Bagnold Sun-Compass: Long Range Desert Group*. 2011. Norderstedt, Books on Demand GmbH. pp. 12-13.
34. cf. Item rgs701192.
35. cf. Bagnold, R.A. & Harding King, W. J. Dec. 1931. p. 530.
36. cf. Török, Zsolt G. *From Expedition Cartography to Topographic Mapping: Italian Military Maps of the Southern Libyan Desert from the 1930s* in BEINEKE, Dieter/Heuncke, Otto, Horst, Thomas & Klein, Uwe G.F. *Festschrift für Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Kurt Brunner anlässlich des Ausscheidens aus dem aktiven Dienst*. 2012. Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Geodäsie der Universität der Bundeswehr München, Heft 87, pp. 259-273.
37. cf. Gross, Kuno. 2011. p. 14.
38. Bagnold, Ralph.A. *Libyan Sands: Travels in a Dead World*. Haag Reprint 1987, London, of 1935 ed.
39. Clayton, Patrick A. *Desert Explorer. A Biography of Colonel P.A. Clayton. 1896 to 1962*. Zerzura Press. Cargreen, Cornwall. 1998. p.42
40. Bagnold, Ralph A. *Libyan Sands*. Hodder and Stoughton. London. 1935.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
42. The documentary film was not released until 1997 when the forgotten

material was discovered and restored by his son, Kurt Mayer. cf. Török, Zsolt G. 2012. p.265.

43. Almásy, László. *Az ismeretlen Szahara*. Franklin. Budapest, 1935.



Stop 3. *The Algerian Sphinx. or*
2°20'14.03" East Ghardaïa, 1933



“A consciousness of the desert operates between craving and satiety.”

Robert Smithson, *A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects* in *Art Forum*, September 1968.

Le Corbusier never built in the desert. He did, though, make a resolution to become desert-architect. “I will limit all my work to that which causes me to pass from barrenness (the desert, the limitless land of hunger and thirst) to splendour; from suffering and anxiety to well-being; from terror to calm; from the empty to the full; from desert to the oasis.”¹ It was the end of the summer of 1931, he had just arrived in Paris from Algeria, the sand still in his boots and the burning sun impressed on his retina. Back in the metropolis, the experience of the desert posed an enigmatic question, a riddle uttered by an Algerian Sphinx, or *la femme à le licorne*. Though never building his foundations on sand, the North African country played an important role in his biography.

Le Corbusier has an extended and complex relationship with Algeria. From his first step in Africa in 1931 – when he visited the country to deliver two conferences during the centenary of the French Colony – it was at least on four occasions that he journeyed in the country until 1942 when his famous Obus Plan for Algiers was unanimously rejected by the Municipal Council of the capital. In between, an outcome of revelatory experiences narrated in articles, books and, overall, drawings.

My interest upon reviewing Le Corbusier’s trips in Algeria is in the problematic nature of his craving for architectural discoveries. His journeys were quests for revelations. Escaping Paris into the desert was a way of clearing one’s eyes – bringing light to the ‘eyes that do not see’ – with the promise of transforming his way of looking back

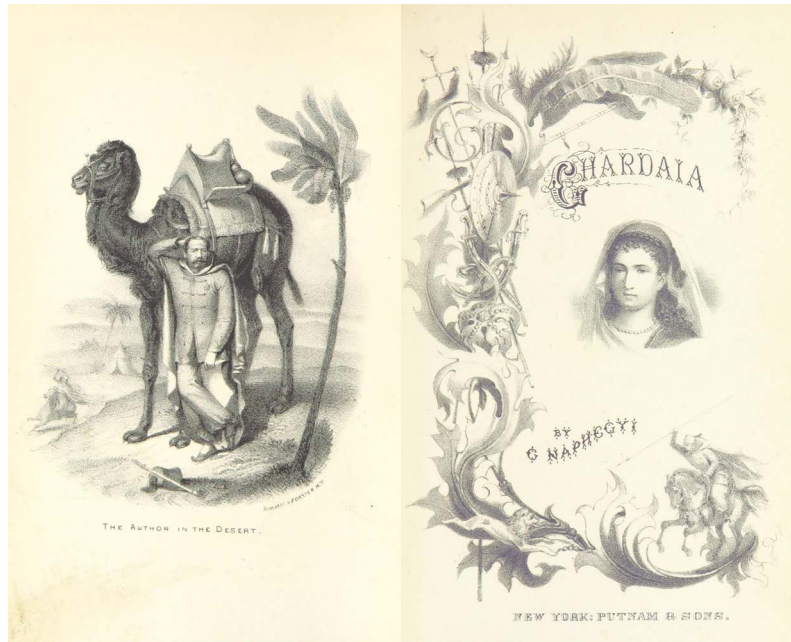


Fig. 1- Naphegyi, Gabor. *The Author in the Desert* in *Ghardaia Or, Ninety Days Among the B'Ni Mozab*. 1871.

at the metropolis. My reading is that the desert actually supposed an excess of light for Le Corbusier's eyes. What was originally a critical project eventually ended up turning upside down, becoming a project of the Parisian expansion.

Against this reading, two lines of thinking have reflected on these journeys. First, the post-colonial critique would state that simply Le Corbusier didn't receive any light at all in the desert. His glasses were obscured by preconceived Orientalist ideas. This counter-argument to my reading is epitomised by the writings of Professor Zeynep Çelik who in her *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations* (1997) blames Le Corbusier for attempting a colonial realignment of Algeria with France in the plans for the capital. In Le Corbusier's proposals, she sees "the idea of *la plus grande France*, which represents not only an imperial French doctrine, but also a colonial consciousness."² Not solely criticising Le Corbusier's plan as colonial, she also argues the perpetuation of the Orientalist tendency in the architect's observations. It is precisely that 'colonial mindset' with which she sees the architect travelling around Algeria. The text and drawings that describe his visits – in Çelik's view – are full of platitudes and preconceived ideas from other travellers like Théophile Gautier and Pierre Loti, that prioritised the cliché over the description of the actual conditions of the country at their times. It is as if his cultural glasses prevented Le Corbusier from seeing the real Algeria. In postcolonial theory, Le Corbusier's would be a reenactment of another European visitor to that desert, Gabor Naphegyi (1824-1884)³. Naphegyi's attitude is represented in the frontispiece of the novel outcome of his journey (Fig. 1). Prefacing his romance among dunes, the author appears standing face to face to the reader, self-confident, resting his head over a camel's neck. The portrait already condenses the story. A search for his beloved that would take him through the Sahara where he suffers from thirst, heat, gets captured by the Tuaregs, and eventually escapes through an arduous crossing of the Atlas Mountains just to, in due course, find the graveyard of his beloved in an off-the-beaten-track oasis. The stereotypical desert-romance; and, because of that, so



Fig. 2- Grille, René. Portrait of Le Corbusier in *Les Chantiers Nord-Africains* in Alex Gerber, 1993, p.106.

beloved. The portrait has all the elements of good desert writing: the camel, the palm tree, the Tarboosh hat and pipe, and the tartar tent where to be attacked by the nomads. But what the image specifically has is the load of tradition, the tradition of an image with the same stereotypical elements traced over and over. Not by chance was Naphegyi nicknamed ‘the most brilliant imposter.’⁴ At the end of the day, it was not only about the elements but about him incorporating them in his persona. It was not a question of the stereotypical but about becoming a stereo-type. Obviously, Le Corbusier’s sojourns in the desert are full of camels, women in hijab and vendors. However, what we miss in his story is precisely the portrait; the adherence of his own persona to the stereotyped tradition; his image as impostor.

The second counter-position to my argument would state that Le Corbusier did receive light, enough for influencing his practice of architecture, but not in excess – as I argue – not to the level of becoming a reversal of the original project. Paradoxically, one of the few discovered portraits of Le Corbusier in Algeria is a drawing, made by his friend René Grille (Fig. 2). It’s precisely the known profile with glasses and bow-tie. His persona was already stereotyped enough so as not to allow the incorporation of further Oriental clichéd traits. What the second position argues, though, is that Le Corbusier knew how to see beyond the received Oriental ideas. This is the way Le Corbusier conceived his Algeria, a land of revelation, of architectural discovery. Though it is hard to picture Le Corbusier’s iconic profile without glasses, Professor Alex Gerber claimed that certain orientalist hue didn’t obstruct the architect from illuminating experiences in his journey. The portrait of Le Corbusier in North Africa, for Gerber, is to be conceived without glasses, removing the turban, water-divining rods, worn out teapots and any other extra gizmos brought by Gautier or Loti’s Orientalism. In his reading, what Le Corbusier saw in the country changed his way of seeing and producing architecture. Gerber’s defence of the architect in his PhD focuses on the two journeys in 1931, claiming that a certain ‘learning-from’ attitude of Le Corbusier in Algeria was crucial for the development of his

269

subsequent practice⁵. The problem for this reading is on ascertaining how much Le Corbusier was 'learning from' the desert, and how much from previous travellers like Marcel Mercier whom he had read before departure.

What this Stop argues is that neither focusing on the Obus Plan – a failed project from the part of the colonial government – nor limiting the revelatory moments to the 1931 journey – revelations that were actually brought from France, rather than discovered in the desert – are the way to understand the influence of North Africa over Le Corbusier. The key to grasp Le Corbusier's mindset in Algeria (colonial or otherwise) is in the desert aerial trip in the winter of 1933, a truly magic carpet ride – with all its connotations of cliché, allure and, furthermore, orthographic vision. Aerial vision played a key role in the way Le Corbusier thought of Algeria. To disclose this mindset I would like to approach Le Corbusier's journeys through the classic desert tripartite formula of thirst-gulp-satiety. The experience of craving for water in the desert tends to overturn into satiety, into an excess. Le Corbusier did experience actual thirst for water. But this will be used in this Stop in order to discuss his architectural revelations. *Thirst* will deal with Le Corbusier's first journey as unfolding the tension of architectural craving – a tension generated by the desire of architectural discoveries and the impossibility of finding them in a land of aridity. This tension bears the risk of rushing the revelation, not being actual discovery, but the reading of his experience through the platitudes of previous explorers. *A Gulp* will deal with an actual architectural revelation. The airplane is the one enabling it by seeing the cities of the desert from above. However, *Satiety* will problematise how the revelation was incorporated back in Le Corbusier's practice. An incorporation that is prompted precisely by the airplane itself through its capacity of zooming in and out continuously. At that point, the quenching character of revelations is turned into the excess of satiety.

Thirst

In 1933, flying over the oases of the Sahara, Le Corbusier claimed “see[ing] clearly.”⁶ However, in order to understand the figure he saw neatly, his first incursion into the Algerian desert, his first ‘seeing’ – even it was unclearly – forms a clear background. This took place two years before, in the summer of 1931. It was then that he related his ‘vocational’ experience as builder of oasis⁷. Departing from Paris southbound “à la recherche du soleil”, his itinerary took him through the Spanish peninsula, crossing the strait between Europe and Africa, into Morocco and Algiers. There in the desert regions “he saw a call”, or rather an answer to a question: “L’oasis répond” – as he titled the entry in his travel diary that he published in *Plans* magazine. It was his encounter with Ghardaïa, the oasis to the south of the Atlas Mountains. The context in which Le Corbusier received a ‘response’ was educational. The journey through North Africa, as has been argued by Francesco Tentori, constituted a “Second Oriental sojourn”, a continuation of the journey for discovering the East which first part took place in 1911⁸. In that sense, Le Corbusier was moving in the context of the Grand Tour, a traditional form of education in which the journey operated as a way of displacing the architect far from the studio and the school into the visible lessons of traditional settlements and the ruins of past civilisations⁹. Ghardaïa, though, never formed part of any well constituted route. Perhaps because of that, the sense of displacement away from Paris was intensified, and the allure of the discovery was overdramatised in the text. In fact, reading his article in *Plans* the reader wonders what it is that Le Corbusier ‘saw’, while text and his own sketchy illustrations do not legibly point to the same findings.

On the one hand, the text describes the fascination with a civilisation, the Mozabites, that had developed at the margins of Modern society, avoiding “industry, work, Taylorism, commerce...” with their downfalls of “vanity, pride, jealousy, envy, imitation, and the suspension of interior life” precipitated by “the money, as a goal.”¹⁰ A 271

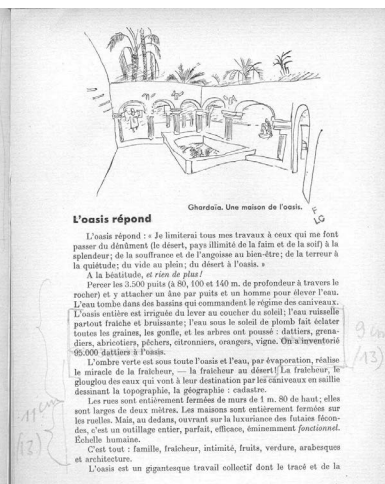
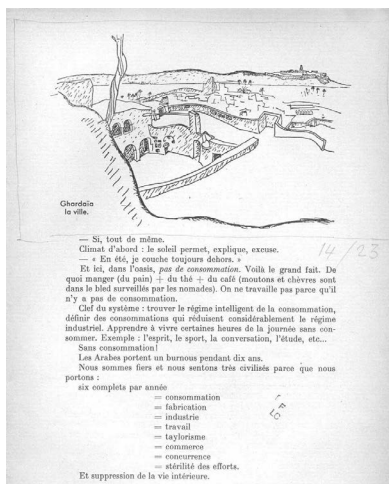
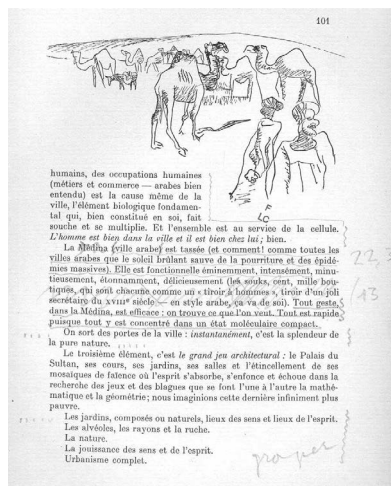
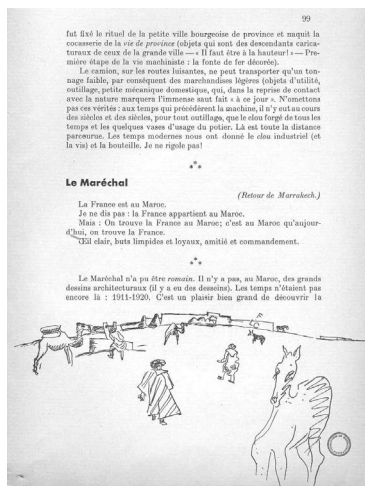
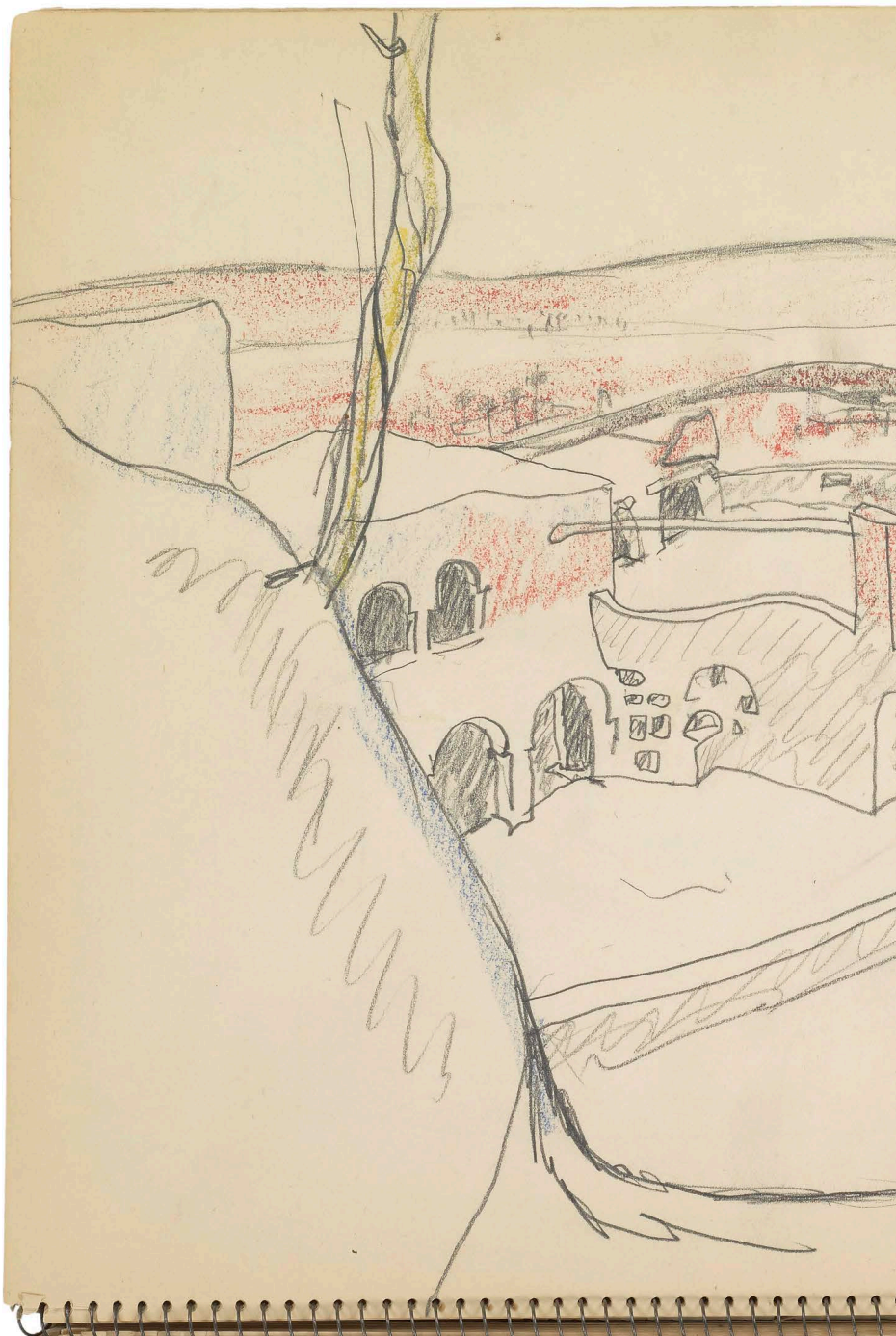


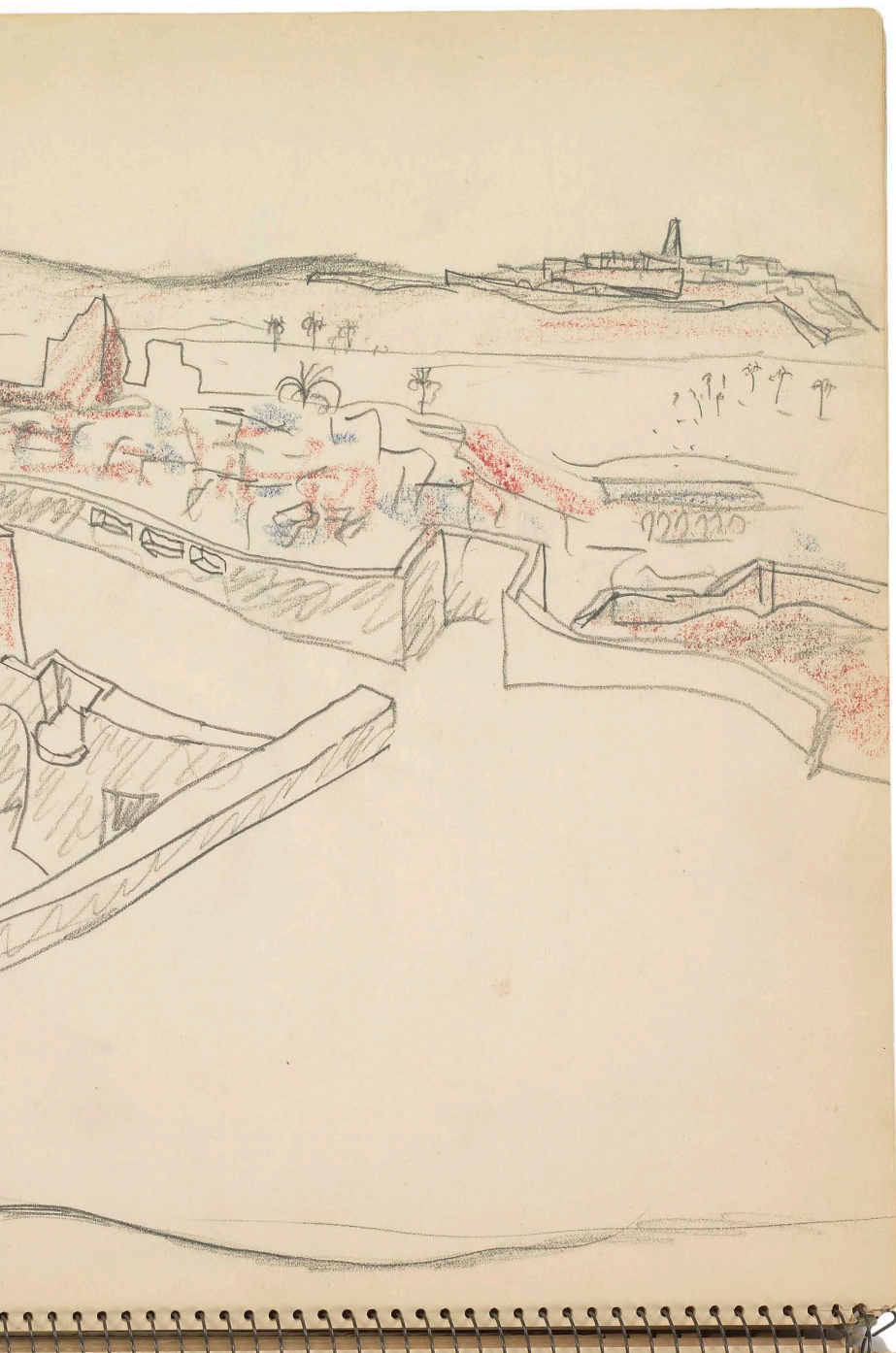
Fig. 3- Le Corbusier, 'Coupe en Travers. Retours...ou L'Enseignement du Voyage' in *Plans*. Oct. 1931. Paris. pp. 99, 101, 103 & 104 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

form of living still in contact with Nature, – precisely by the grinding struggle against the desolation of the desert – and the enrichment of the spirit. The desert city of Ghardaïa, as Le Corbusier ascertains, finds a logic in which the vanishing point is not consumption anymore: “Et ici, dans l’oasis, *pas de consommation*. Voilà le grand fait. [Here, in the oasis, no consumption. Here is the great achievement.]”¹¹ Obviously, Le Corbusier seems to be talking about Paris, in reverse, rather than about the desert town in itself. Not for nothing does Le Corbusier open the text placing the reader on his return to St-Germain-des-Prés, 6e arrondissement, after the 26-day voyage¹². However, paradoxically the strangeness, the otherness of the oasis points the direction to Paris. The question is about Paris; the answer from the oasis. Precisely its alienness did speak to the Modern Man, about “a new vision for living, an ethics directed through a different course.”¹³ As a reverse mirror of Paris, Ghardaïa operates as self-reflection of Modernity. A source from where to draw a lesson:

“Le monde moderne ayant perdu contact avec ses conditions premières et n’ayant plus souvenir des conditions profondes de la conscience humaine, accueillerait la prédication d’un Jésus nouveau, aussi énergique, aussi simple, aussi fort, aussi sublimement humain. [The Modern world, having lost contact with its original conditions and no longer remembering the profound state of human consciousness, would welcome the preaching of a new Jesus, as energetic, as simple, as strong, as sublimely human.]”¹⁴

However, this vocational call as desert architect or Modern-world Jesus is not that easily found in the illustrations that accompany the text (Fig. 3). Preceded by beautiful clichéd sceneries of camels and palm-trees, the two illustrations of Ghardaïa are indeed more centred on the architecture of the oasis city. They focus the attention particularly on the courtyard – one of a mosque and one of a house (Fig. 3 c & d, Fig. 4). Sitting behind the 1.80m walls that face the narrow streets, the courtyards host life on “a human scale.”¹⁵ The Ghardaïa profile is pyramidal, crowned with the slender minaret of 273





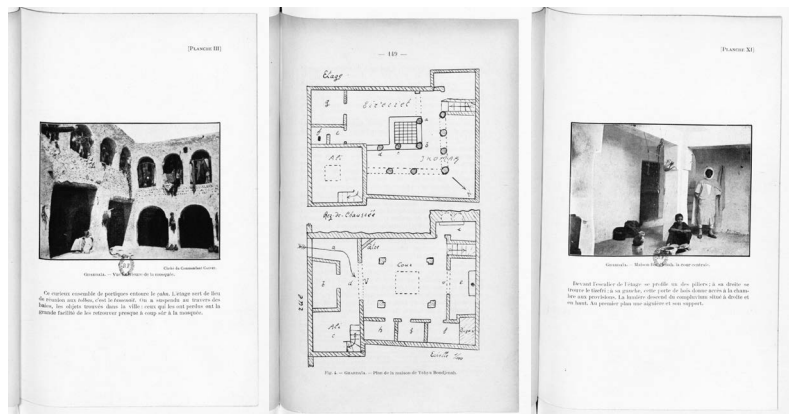
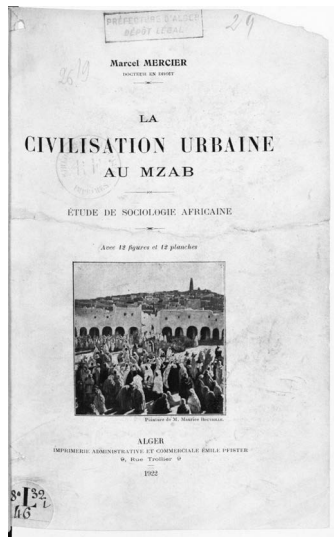


Fig. 5- Mercier, Marcel. *La Civilisation Urbaine au Mzab*. 1922 1st edition. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 6- Mercier, Marcel. *La Civilisation Urbaine au Mzab*. 1922 1st edition, pp. planche III, 149 & planche XI ©BnF Gallica

the mosque. However, Le Corbusier didn't depict it; he turns around from that predictable view and places himself within the mosque. Standing next to the minaret, he looks at its courtyard (Fig. 4). The second drawing mirrors the one of the mosque, but transferring it into the domestic realm. It is the courtyard of "une maison de l'oasis", a generic type omnipresent in the oasis (Fig. 3d). It is the courtyard of the mosque that acts as centre and cell that gives order to the rest of the city, an element generator of order – as he put it. An interesting architectural finding if it was not because he had already read the idea in *La Civilisation Urbaine au M'zab* by Marcel Mercier (Fig. 5)¹⁶.

An ethnographic study, Mercier centres his investigation on the cities of the M'zab, to which Ghardaïa belongs – isolated from foreign invasions, an object "conserved as a fragment of Antiquity."¹⁷ It is, paradoxically, a 'frozen' island in the middle of the desert. Interested in the study of social formations, for Mercier the city constitutes "a sociological subject par-excellence."¹⁸ And on trying to encompass the whole city¹⁹, his approach is organised on two main scales: "*la ville et la maison*" – moving "*ab exterioribus ad interior* [outside in]"²⁰. This zooming-in process culminates claiming the mosque as the "élément generateur de la cité."²¹ Indeed, the concept of 'generating element' very much resounded with the Corbusian tropes at the time of his journey. Of the 12 illustrations in the original edition of Mercier's 1922 volume – the second edition with further illustrations came one year after Le Corbusier's sojourn – several emphasise the domestic courtyards. He opens the description of the interior of the houses with a chapter dedicated to the central court, and he includes a hand drawn plan of one of the houses (Fig. 6).

On planning his desert "treasure hunting", Le Corbusier already knew where to look; somehow, more of a retroactive discovery than actual unexpected encounter. It is important now to look at the impressions he gathered while being there, before getting back to Paris and writing the article. As opposed to the account he published in *Plans*, looking at non-published impressions Le Corbusier was left rather cold by the

(previous page)Fig.
4- Le Corbusier,
FLC C12 5230
©Fondation Le
Corbusier

desert. While both article and letters, though, gravitate around that condition of being displaced, the former engulfs the idea of finding forgotten architecture; the latter the impossibility of finding anything. Gerber's emphasis on 'architectural discoveries' – and Tentori's desert trip as Grand Tour – clashes with the impressions he was sending back to Paris when on route. "J'ai la tête entièrement reposée. Je n'ai pas pensé une minute ni à l'architecture ni aux livres. [My head is fully rested. I did not think for a minute about painting, architecture or books.]"²² More arduous than what he depicted in the article, the view from his Voisin 14cv of 1931 was described as land of lack, of desolation. On the 24th of August, a day before arriving at Ghardaïa he wrote about his non-architectural mindset to Yvonne, complaining about the poisoned food he had on the road. Before leaving for the desert from the capital of Algeria, his mind was already back home: "We will leave for the desert and then it will be a sudden return to the north on a vertical line Biskra-Algiers-Marseille-Paris. My head is fully rested. I did not think for a minute about painting, architecture or books."²³ And to the hunger of foodborne illness, the desert imposed thirst. A day before departing from it he wrote:

"Ici, Vonvon, on pense à toi, car on meurt.
De soif, mais on ne sait plus que faire ni où se mettre. De
l'eau de l'eau.
Jamais on n'aurait imaginé ça.
(...)
Baisers dd.
Depuis cette nuit nous remontons au nord.
[Here, Vonvon, we think of you because we are dying.
Dying of thirst, and we neither know what to do nor where
to go. Some water, some water.
We would never have imagined this.
(...)
Kisses dd.
After tonight we are going back to the north.]"²⁴

Though it is a bit hard to believe that he "never ha[d] imagined" that he was to suffer thirst in the Sahara, it is interesting to see his

insistence on the desert trope. Rather than the oasis of camels and palm trees, Ghardaïa was a dry land of drought and slow death. The concluding postscript indicated a trajectory of longing, of wishing he was back in Paris. The most desperate remark was sent to his mother, who dramatically would have read it in the villa he designed, seeing through the windows the abundance of water in the Alps²⁵. The “sudden return to the north on a vertical line Biskra-Algiers-Marseille-Paris”, the “going back to the north” is graphically depicted. A straight arrow connecting Ghardaïa to Paris, traversed by “dying of thirst” and a Corbusian skull (Fig.7).

“morts de soif
Et maintenant 54°
Gardaïa (sic)
Territoire du Sud
Samedi
[dying of thirst
And now 54°
Gardaïa (sic)
Southern Territory
Saturday]”²⁶

Slightly cynical humour to choose a postcard illustrating the city-well in its front. It is hard to ascertain whether he had architectural revelations or not. However the article in *Plans* seems to bring ideas from Gerber rather than actual experiences of lucidity. If we were to consider one moment of illumination on this trip, it would be in the realising of the aridity of the land, when his thirst for water was at its highest, and he sent the postcards back home. Though paradoxically he died in the Mediterranean – not of thirst but of drowning – the Corbusian line was simply a line of longing in this journey. In any case, the straight arrow connecting Ghardaïa and Paris was to become a crucial lesson from the oasis in the later trip of 1933. Thirst was to be sated first. Though the question of Orientalist glasses was present by looking at Ghardaïa through the eyes of Mercier, what this first journey to the oasis reveals is that it was not a matter of glasses – Orientalist or not – but of a glass.

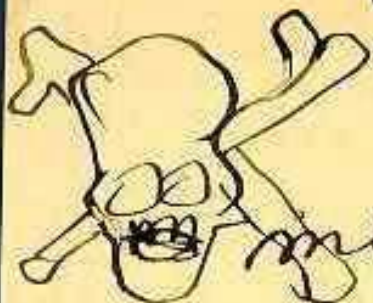
484. GHARDAIA - Un Puits au M'Zah



PHOT. COMBES-MACON

Avril 31

Paris
au nord



mons de siif

c'est formidable
Pierre

Et maintenant 54-

Gardaia
Territoire de la

Samedi



Madame
Jeanne Ferrel

à la

Croix

Croix

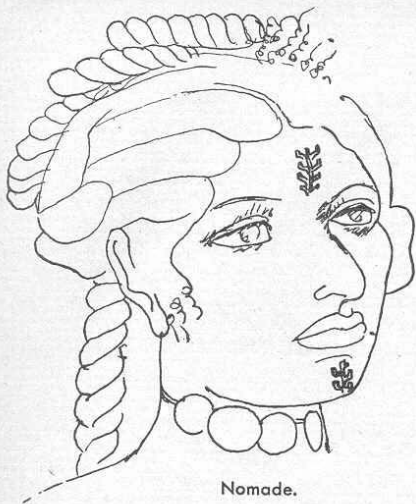
des
familles

ARTY POSTAL

R 2

31





Nomade.

Avec de tels leviers, gagner de l'argent devient une manie, un acte maniaque, automatique, dépourvu de saines relations de cause à effet (alimentation du corps). Gagner de l'argent, n'importe comment, n'importe quand, avec n'importe quoi = une nouvelle vision de la vie, une éthique dirigée autrement.

Dirigée où?

Là où nous sommes tombés, en pleine catastrophe.

Il faut désormais assigner des buts humains à cette fonction périlleuse : gagner de l'argent.

Plus on retourne la question, plus on mesure qu'il s'agit d'un problème de conscience.

Le monde moderne ayant perdu contact avec ses conditions premières et n'ayant plus souvenir des conditions profondes de la conscience humaine, accueillerait la prédication d'un Jésus nouveau, aussi énergique, aussi simple, aussi fort, aussi sublimement humain.

Eh bien, ce n'est pas si simple que cela!

I. La glace au désert.

Un bon apéritif (anis et grenadine) est vendu à l'Hôtel du Sud, à Ghardaïa, *un franc*; il est servi avec de l'eau fraîche et de la glace, et il est accompagné d'une carafe d'eau pure amenée des puits de l'oasis, à 6 kms de là. Nous sommes au pays de la Soif, on boit, on boit! C'est une inondation, c'est une manie, c'est une maladie, c'est une passion. *Un franc*, vingt centimes d'avant guerre; nous sommes au troisième désert depuis l'Atlas, après 400 kms de piste.

Une bouteille de bière de Champigneulle de Nancy avec seau à glace, coûte *cinq* francs à l'oasis. Une bouteille fait quatre bocks ou

Fig. 8- Le Corbusier, 'Coupe en Travers. Retours...ou L'Enseignement du Voyage' in *Plans*. Oct. 1931. Paris. p. 106.

©Fondation Le Corbusier

A Gulp

While a slightly banal truism for desert travellers, thirst played a key role in his first journey. The impression in his letters, mixed with the nostalgia of turning homeward, paradoxically linked Ghardaïa and Paris. But also in the article in *Plans*, thirst makes act of presence as a key element for understanding the oasis – he titled it ‘La glace au désert’ [Ice in the desert] (Fig. 8). As in the classic scene of Lee Thompson’s film *Ice Cold in Alex* (1958), Le Corbusier describes himself emerging from the desert one sun-drenched day, into the Hotel du Sud, sitting down and ordering a bottle of Champigneulle beer from Nancy. That moment that in *Ice Cold in Alex* was “worth waiting for” (Fig. 9), for Le Corbusier supposed the turning point from thirst to satiety, contemplating the “miracle of my ice-cold beer from Nancy.” Obviously, the miracle was not the eerie presence of both ice and beverage in the ‘land of Thirst’, but the systems that enabled it. The miracle was Modernity and quite patently he could contemplate it there.

“(…) boire les apéritifs (...) à Ghardaïa représente simplement tout le phénomène moderne de la production, l’industrie des transports: chemins de fer, paquebots, camions, l’armature même de la vie machiniste.

[Drinking aperitif (...) in Ghardaïa represents simply the whole modern phenomenon of production, the transport industry: railways, liners, trucks, the very frame of machinist life.]”²⁷

The ice-cold beer satisfied his two longings: that of a gulp and that of Paris. Ghardaïa was not, then, as Mercier put it, “a city conserved as in Antiquity”, but very much a dot connected to the network of Modern infrastructure. The postcard to his mother was just linking the nodes. On the 1931 trip, thirst was the vector of desire. For the following one the vector became literally a ‘line of flight’. Finally directed homebound by car and boat along the line – attached to the ground and water – with a ‘claimed discovery’ about which he knew

(previous page) Fig. 7- Le Corbusier. Postcard, 30 August 1931, CÉJ and Pierre to his mother. R2-1-128-001 & 002 ©Fondation Le Corbusier





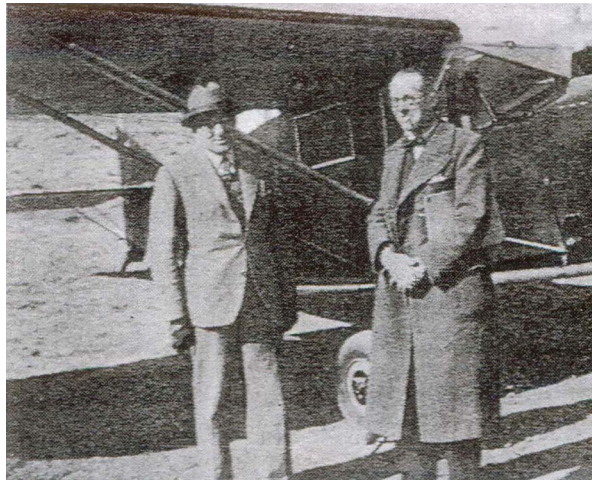


Fig. 10a- Le Corbusier with Durafour. Le Corbusier is carrying his sketch book.

Fig. 10b- Durafour's Caudron C.282 / 4 Phalene. from Gerber, Alex. 1993. pp. 180-181.

before stepping there, the desert sojourn in the summer of '31 was still a too down-to-earth way of thinking of the desert.

(previous page)
Fig. 9- Lee
Thompson, John.
Ice Cold in Alex.
1958

It was in the winter on '33 that gave Le Corbusier a different perspective on it, lifting up his thoughts. As he described in his book *Aircraft*, "(w)ith my friend Durafour, I left Algiers one sun-drenched afternoon in winter and we flew above the Atlas towards the towns of the M'Zab (...)" Though familiar with the territory from two years before, the airplane put him on different airs, thinking of the desert cities differently, immersed in a new moment of revelation.

"Durafour, steering his little plane, pointed out two specks on the horizon, *"There are the cities! You will see!"* Then, like a falcon, he stooped several times upon one of the towns, coming round in a spiral, dived, just clearing the roofs, and went off in a spiral in the other direction (...) Thus I was able to discover the principle of the towns of the M'Zab. The airplane had revealed everything to us."²⁸

Written as part of the preface – titled 'A Frontispiece to Pictures of the Epic of the Air' – for a book dedicated to the great achievements of aerial technology, the account of the journey does not lack overdramatised impressions.

The contemporary reader would tend to associate a flying Le Corbusier with the spatial shift brought by commercial jetliners. At least, this is the case of Beatriz Colomina's reading of the architect's aerial travels. Certainly, the airplane was a sine qua non for the practice of Le Corbusier, building and lecturing in Buenos Aires, La Plata, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, Bogota, Moscow, Tokyo, Baghdad, Ahmadabad and Boston²⁹. As Colomina ascertains, "Le Corbusier could be said to be the first global architect"³⁰, the first one taking advantage of the new spatial condition brought by the airplane, collapsing the whole world into a global network. The paradigmatic working space for the architect would then be the 'L-C seat' – the number 5 of the Super Constellation model of Air India in which he

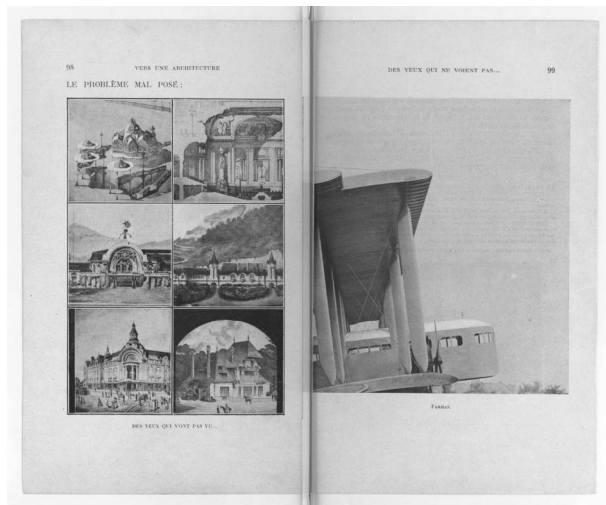
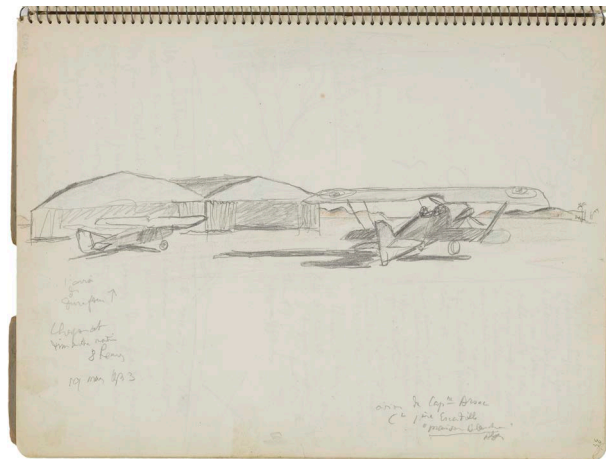


Fig. 11- Le Corbusier, *Sketch with Durafour's airplane shown on the left.*
 19 May 1933. FLC C5 5013 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 12- Le Corbusier, *double spread comparing 'Le Probleme Mal Posé' [the problem badly conceived] and a Farman aircraft from Eyes that do not see/ Airplanes in Vers une Architecture.* 1925. pp. 98-99.

regularly flew Paris-Delhi³¹. There, first class ensconced in his airborne 'chaise longue', Le Corbusier was "at home"³², immersed in the global network. While this might arguably be the case for a post-jetliners commercial network, it is definitively not the case for Le Corbusier in the 1930s. It seems symptomatic that in her text, Colomina avoids *Aircraft* – perhaps the most literal source for Le Corbusier's notes on the point of view from the air. Obviously, the 1933 Caudron C.282/4 Phalene of Durafour³³ didn't include cosy airliner seats – masterpiece of ergonomic intelligence – within its cramped 2.25m x 1.20m four-passenger interior³⁴ (Fig. 10 & 11). It also missed "the electronic chimes, ribbed rubber flooring, smells of distant coffee and nearby toilets, muzak, whispers of conditioned air from overhead diffusers, signs saying Baggage claim and sloping corridor floors"³⁵, with which Banham summarised the flying experience, a fundamental set of characteristics already engulfing the experience of any global architect in the 1950s. For the '30s, airborne 'interiority' was definitively not a homey business. Le Corbusier's 1935 book was all about *exteriors*. Not only, though mainly, the vision that opened beyond the windscreen was crucial – the Caudron C. 282 being praised for the pilot's panoramic *visibilité*³⁶. Le Corbusier's concern with exteriors of the airplane in *Aircraft* is twofold. On a first level, the airplane is a question of aerial view, what is seen outside – not an issue of the seat, its ergonomics or any other interior gadgetry. It is not a question of the machine, but of a new viewpoint. In this, he was moving away from the times of the *Esprit Nouveau* and the engineer's aesthetics. From "des yeux qui ne voient pas/les avions [eyes that do not see/airplanes]"³⁷ he was moving into what the eyes were literally seeing out there (Fig. 12). This is clearly the case when, after being approached by the director of The Studio publishers, Le Corbusier proposed shifting the editor's original idea for the book, not focusing on the object, but on "what is seen from the aeroplane."³⁸ Unfortunately, the director didn't buy into the idea³⁹, and the publication became a photo-book of "the aeroplane itself"⁴⁰, a sort of sticker album of planes in which the aerial views from the cabin are relegated to the last bit of the sequence. However,



Fig. 13- Alberti, *manuscript with drawing*, 1438.

despite the opposition of the editors, Le Corbusier managed to sneak the argument in through his introduction to the album, 'A Frontispiece to Pictures of the Epic of the Air'.

The introductory text was clearly operative in this sense: opening the eyes of the amateur reader that was to contemplate the 'new vision'⁴¹. For the reader to understand this 'new vision', Le Corbusier benefits from a very old story, re-enacting the myth of Icarus, who dared to open his wings upwards towards the sun. Obviously, Le Corbusier didn't emphasise the overambitious Icarian bravery ending up in catastrophe. He rather remained at the level of technology lifting up human enterprises. But furthermore, it was a way for bringing into contemporary times the paradigmatic standpoint of the architect. The architect as bird-man, perhaps better synthesised in Alberti's winged-eye (Fig. 13). The airplane was finally materialising some five hundred years of metaphors.

But if understanding 'exterior' was primarily a matter of the aerial view – of what you see outside the airplane – on a second level 'exterior' was about the space in which the airplane was putting you in – outside the metropolis. For this, Icarus again was illustrative; or rather, his father. Daedalus – father of Icarus – was the designer of his wax wings. But, furthermore, he is said to be the architect of the labyrinth in Knossos. Another way of tracing the primitive figure of the architect, well before Alberti⁴², adding the feature of being the only one capable of conceiving the labyrinth as full-picture. In any case, as the myth goes, both escaped their imprisoning maze. The airborne Le Corbusier was embodying the myth, escaping the city. His *alter ego* draws him to conclude the implications of aerial view as a means of dispelling the angst produced by the inescapable nineteenth-century metropolis. The aircraft raised the human eye from its fallen condition, understanding the urban labyrinth's intricacy as visually readable element. The aerial vista, therefore, endowed us with a critical tool: "the airplane indicts", with which Le Corbusier summarises his text⁴³. The airplane was not about being immersed in a global airliner network, but rather about escaping the system. The

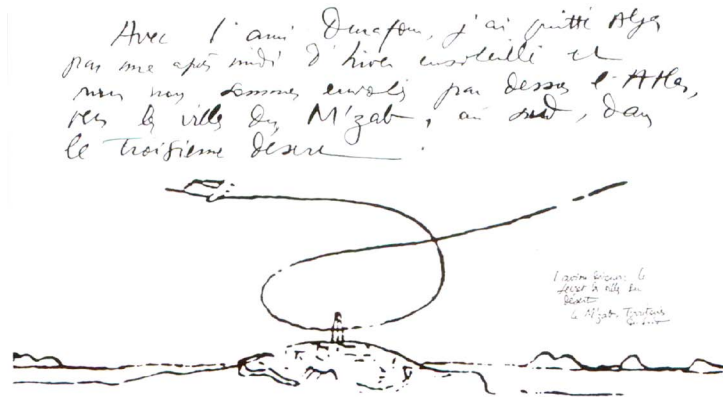


Fig. 14a- Le Corbusier. *Flight with Durafour over the cities of the M'Zab*. Item B2-10-304. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 14b- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey* Fondation Le Corbusier C5-5010, from Gresleri, Giuliano. *Viaggio e scoperta, descrizione e transizione* in *Casabella*, vol. 531-532, Jan.-Feb. 1987.

Fig. 15- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey* Fondation Le Corbusier C5-5011, from Gresleri, Giuliano. *Viaggio e scoperta, descrizione e transizione* in *Casabella*, vol. 531-532, Jan.-Feb. 1987.

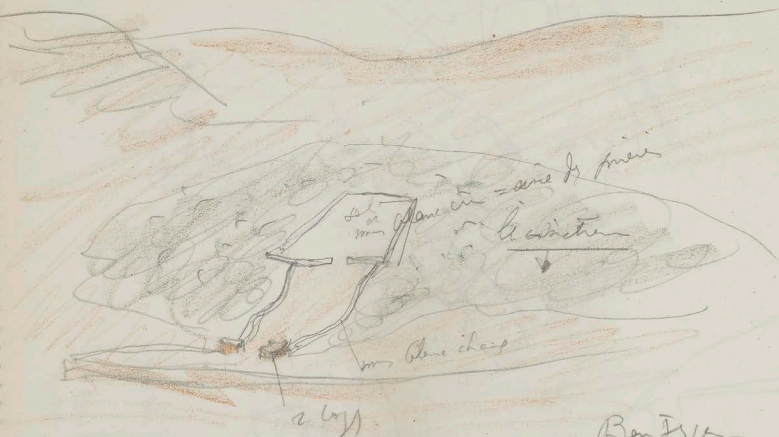
airplane was precisely about being without, generating an exterior space of criticality, of accusation.

Closing the lines with his desert journey, the reader wonders if Le Corbusier is also to charge against the oasis. In this case, the airplane does not indict (Fig.14). Rather, the oasis of Ghardaïa is another exterior to the metropolis. Ghardaïa also indicts. “Such is the gulf which separates the natural creations of the desert people from the cruel and inhuman creations of white civilisation; this civilisation which a thirst for money has brought to twilight, this civilisation which a new civilisation will soon replace.”⁴⁴

Knowing the critical stance towards Paris, it's time to see what are the oasis' charges against the metropolis. As Le Corbusier points in the text, the flight did teach him a lesson. “The lesson is this: every house in the M'Zab, yes, every house without exception, is a place of happiness, of joy, of a serene existence regulated like an inescapable truth, *in the service of man* and for each. (...) In the M'Zab it is not admitted that any family should be without arcade and garden.”⁴⁵ A gentle disappointment for the reader. Despite the ‘epic’ character of the narrative, unfortunately that text again points out to the same well-learned lesson of the courtyard as the generative element of the desert town, learnt from Mercier.

Nevertheless, the technology of vision of the airplane enabled Le Corbusier a reversal of the process of analysis he had learnt from Mercier. If Mercier proceeded *ab interioribus*, beginning with the city as a whole zooming into the courtyard; from the panoramic window of Durafour's braced monoplane, Le Corbusier reversed the procedure moving in a continuous scaling-in-scaling-out analysis. This is very clear in the series of sketches that are kept in the Foundation (Fig. 14-20). Most likely drawn meters above ground, the cities of the M'Zab show evidence of their generative principle in the aerial perspective which put the architect closer and closer to his paradigmatic standpoint: the plan. Even the interior perspectives of courtyards – which were already present in the journey two years

(following page)
Fig. 16- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5001. ©Fondation Le Corbusier
Fig. 17- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5005. ©Fondation Le Corbusier



Ban Isje



Donc les mas piers
 J'esp: 1e com ans piers
 = blanc & chape blanc
 sans en ornent
 = chape blanc avec 1 pinte
 de bleu

Van foye
avan

etage



ia' n' Jan

Jan klat

houw dachhuis

garnis



lypke



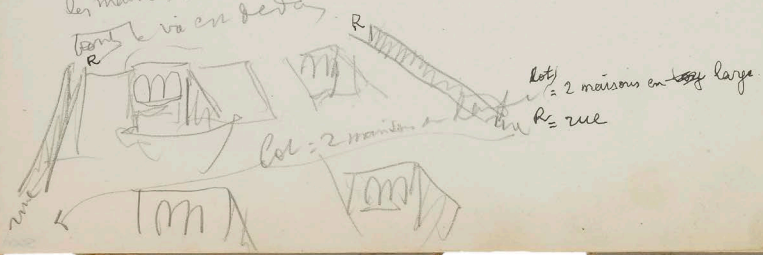
Flem. Berriane Mizal en valse - spirit
 descendant et remontant



Ben assem l'mitte table abash à tout les maisons



La rue : l'airal
 les maisons : maisons mitte
 le va en dedans



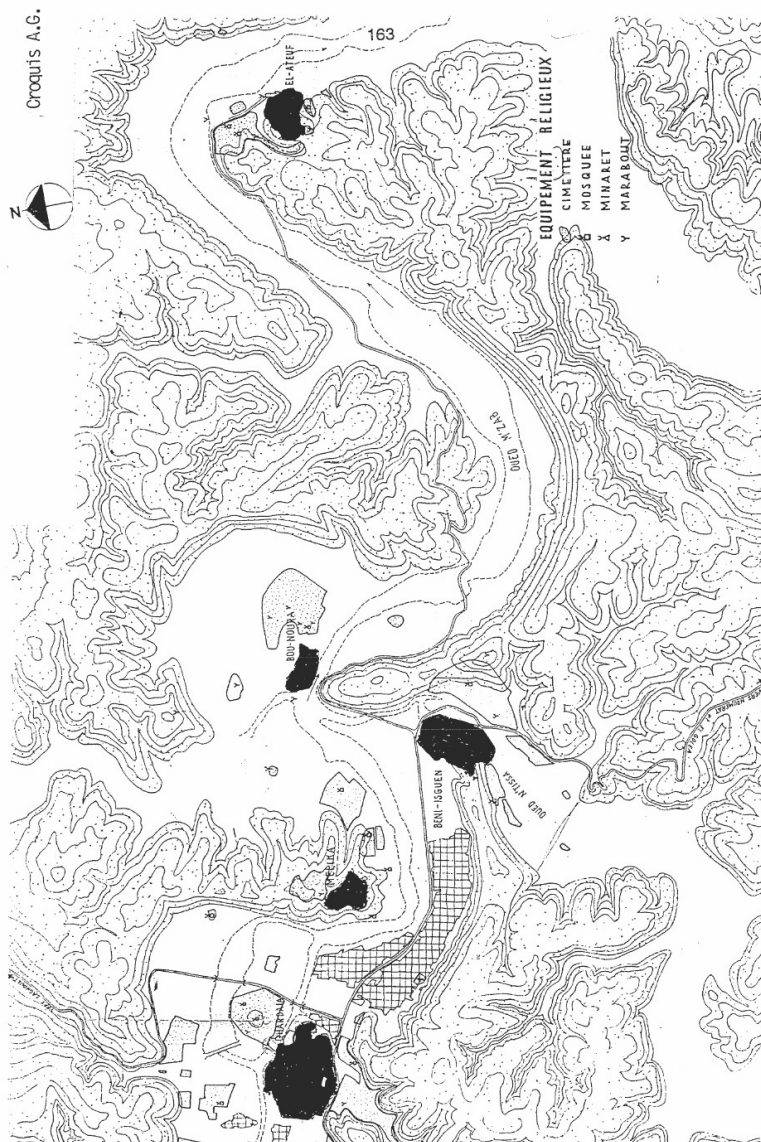


Fig. 21- Alex Gerber. *Croquis of the pentapole system in the valley of the M'zab* in Gerber, Alex. 1993. p. 163.

before – in this flight now they appear accompanied by attempts of surveying plans (Fig. 16-18). As Le Corbusier had stated in *Vers une Architecture* the plan is “the generator”.

Furthermore, this process of zooming out was taken beyond Ghardaïa, implying that the logic of the oasis is the one of an archipelago, rather than isolated island in a sea of sand. Known as the *pentapole*⁴⁶ following the five foundational cities that date back to the 11th-century, the valley of the M’Zab composes a system of interconnected oasis. Having visited Ghardaïa in the summer of ’31, the winter of ’33 taught Le Corbusier about the system of cooperation between summer and winter oasis. A system that operated between satiety and thirst. In *The Radiant City* he titled it “the voice of the desert” and “the melody of the oasis”,

“In the spring, the Arab leaves the winter city, and 3 or 6 kilometres away he enters his summer house, in the palm grove, bringing with him only rugs and kitchen utensils. A master piece! The house is entirely equipped. In winter it is abandoned. All of the doors remain open. I go in, I sketch. I go from there into another house: the same law prevails.”⁴⁷

From courtyard, to oasis, to archipelago; taking off and lifting up, the airplane scaled out the discoveries into the *pentapole* as urban form (Fig. 21).

As Adnan Morshed has argued, the aerial view in Le Corbusier is strongly attached to the notion of urban planning, which scales engage both the architectural object and the territorial realm. As Morshed’s argument continues, Le Corbusier understands “the experience of planning (...) as a universal act of rectifying both spatial and social pathologies”⁴⁸, something that is evidenced in the drawings Le Corbusier produced when flying over Rio. Nevertheless, in the case of the M’Zab, Le Corbusier did not intend to cure any pathology of the oasis. It rather operated in reverse; the aerial view revealing a panacea. The pathologies were back in Paris. It is the cities of the desert that work as a mirror of the XIX-century metropolis, indicting plainly the diseases of the European city. Though the literal gulp was

(previous page)

Fig. 18- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5002.

©Fondation Le Corbusier

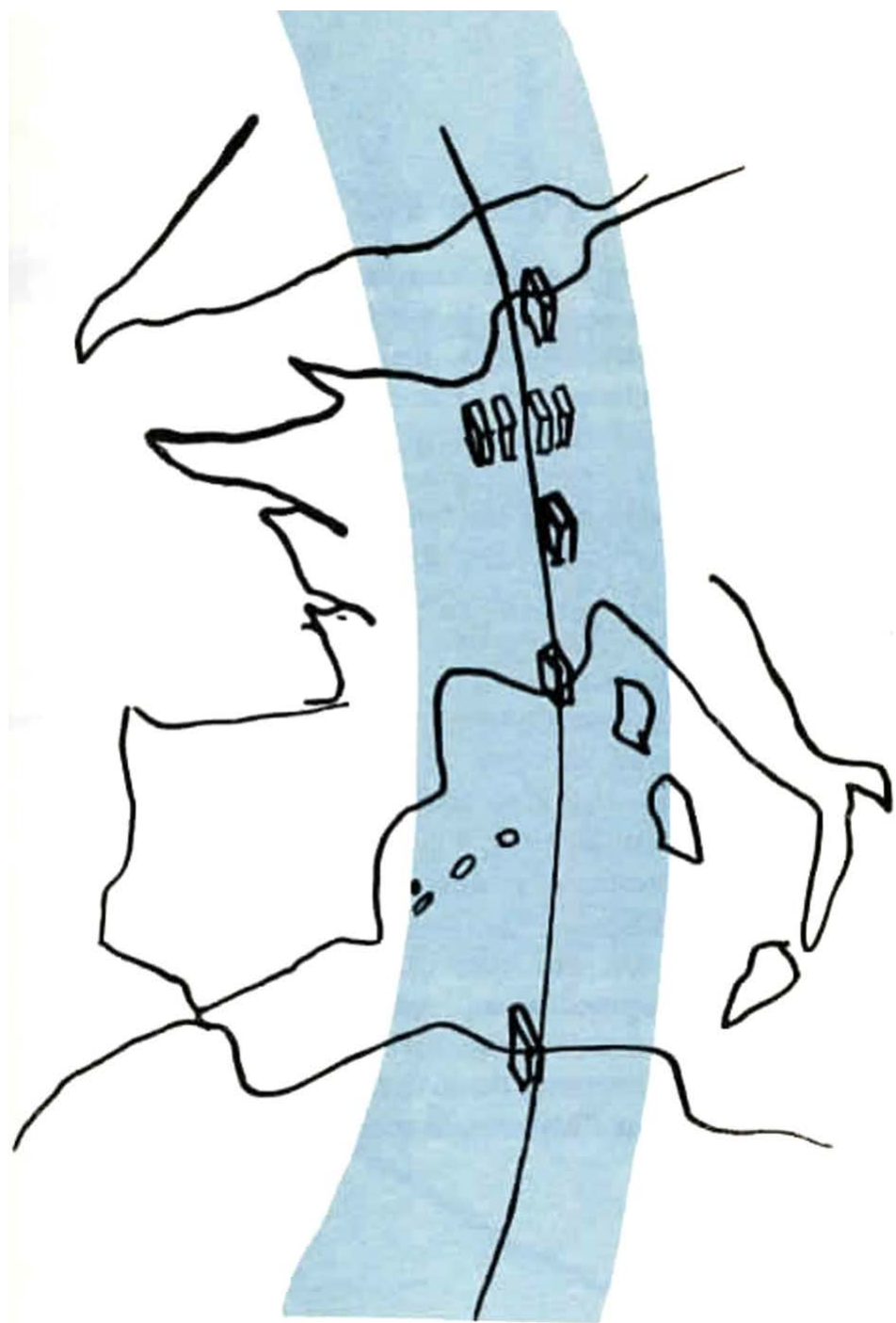
Fig. 19- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5003.

©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 20- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5000.

©Fondation Le Corbusier





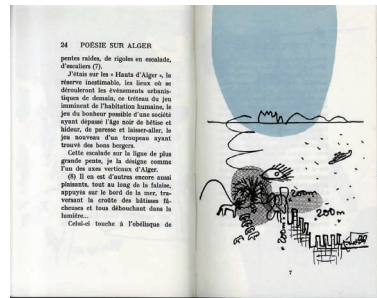
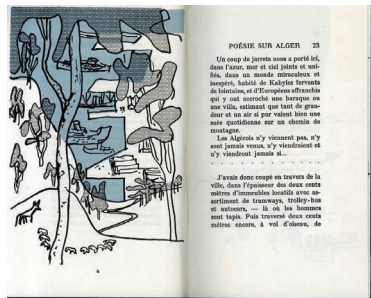
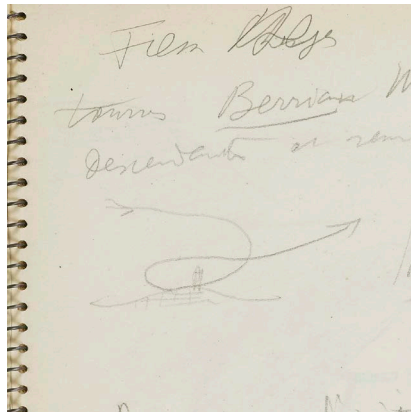


Fig. 23- Le Corbusier. *Diagram of the flight over the valley of the M'zab. Sketch in Le Corbusier, Sketches of 1933 journey.*
 FLC C5-5000. ©Fondation Le Corbusier
 Fig. 24- Le Corbusier. *Poésie sur Alger*, pp. 23, 24, 28 & 30.
 1989 fac-similé of original 1950 edition.

of a beer from Nancy, Le Corbusier discovered ‘new wines’ in the M’zab. Having two poles, Ghardaïa and Paris, he only needed other three to complete the new wineskin that would scale out the process learned in the desert.

Satiety

The new wineskin containing the novelty of an Algerian gulp is a drawing (Fig. 22). Crossing over the outline of Europe and North Africa, a line threads a connection between five poles in the Meridian Paris – El Golea – Gao. The drawing could be read as an attempt to use the logic of the M’Zab’s pentapole as guiding line of a tentative project. A *parti* of a sort. But in any case, the zoom-in-zoom-out process he was developing in the Sahara was finally taken to a transcontinental scale⁴⁹. The airplane enabled a meridian form of vision. The pentapole organisation was borrowed from M’Zab to read Franco-Algerian relations.

Le Corbusier doesn’t give much explanation to the drawing, other than where it was published. Double-spread half-way through the text, the drawing is illustrating the *Poésie sur Alger* [Poem on Algiers] of 1950⁵⁰. The first version of the text⁵¹ was intended to be published in 1942 for the Parisian literary review *Fontaine* as a concise text, devoid of any illustrations⁵². A poem – perhaps more specifically an elegy in its defeating tone – the text is a self-appraisal of his project for the capital of Algiers, finally rejected by the Council of the city that year⁵³. It was a free-verse exposition in which Le Corbusier argues his project as embedding the influences of the North-African country through his journeys there, and the frustration of it being aborted. The final published version makes more evident the lamenting character of the poem, closing it with an epilogue that presents the critical articles – defamatory, in Le Corbusier’s eyes – that changed the opinion of the Council against his project. With this journalistic attack, the original format of the text was shifted into a much more delicate *objet d’art* for the 1950 publication⁵⁴. The 11/17cm *petit* format was borrowed from

(previous page)
Fig. 22- Le
Corbusier,
*Meridien Paris –
El Golea – Gao*
in *Poésie Sur
Alger*.

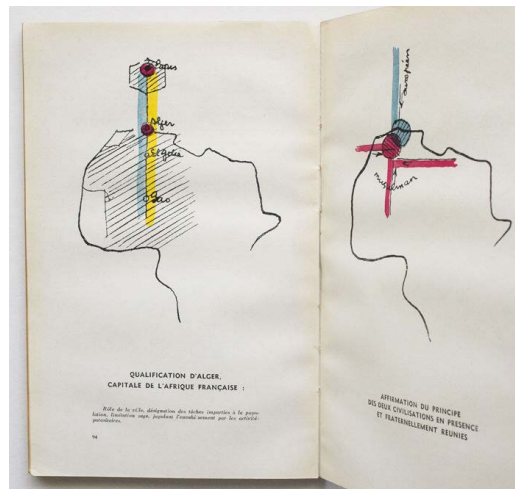
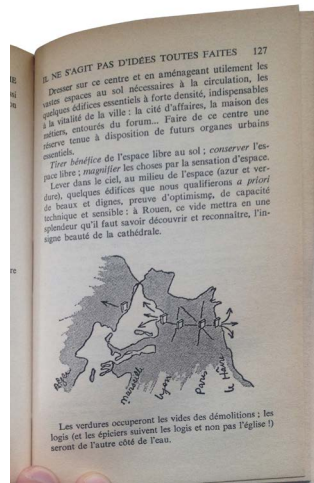


Fig. 25- Le Corbusier, *Manière de Penser l'Urbanisme*. 1977. p. 127
 Le Corbusier, *Manière de Penser l'Urbanisme*. 1946. p. 94-95.

Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duineser Elegien* [Duino Elegies], a particularly handy volume to borrow from, not that much for the elegiac aspect but because its translation into French was one of the few books that Falaize publishing house made before Le Corbusier published his poem with them⁵⁵. But, over all, the text changed by including new images, forming a context for Le Corbusier's words.

Again, the palm-trees, donkeys, sun, horizon and airplane populate the illustrations of Le Corbusier's journeys in Algeria (Fig. 24). However, his proposal is now presented within a much larger panorama of inter-Mediterranean relationships. The drawing for the *Meridien* arguably places the different iterations of the Obus plan⁵⁶ for Algiers within a pentapole set of projects. This context was not anymore a question of Algiers and what he had learnt in the deserts of Algeria, but took his revelations into a transcontinental set of relations. In *Manière de Penser l'Urbanisme* (1946), the meridian diagram appeared again, this time giving name to the poles (Fig. 25)

“Sur une ligne significative, sur un méridien stimulant, le Havre, Paris, Lyon, Marseille ont besoin de cités d'affaires, centre d'administration destinés à assurer le meilleur exercice d'une fonction indiscutable — *les échanges*. En ces quatre villes, quatre jalons magnifiques ne sont point pour enlaidir le pays. Non! Il ne s'agit pas d'idées toutes faites su la laideur ou la beauté.

[On a significant line, on a stimulating meridian, Le Havre, Paris, Lyon, Marseille need business-cities, centres of administrations designed to ensure the best exercise of an indisputable function: the *exchanges*. In these four cities, magnificent milestones are not to uglify the country. No! It's not about ready-made ideas about ugliness or beauty.]”⁵⁷

In the pentapole scheme, he was missing the African pole. Le Havre, Paris, Lyon, Marseille; they are the ones organising the line in France. Alger was an appendix, an extension of the project towards the south. It was then thought as a project for increasing the “grandeur française.”⁵⁸ The concern was with lifting up France from its devastated condition after the war⁵⁹. “In the world concert,”

Le Corbusier continues, bringing back a global context, “if France is seen from without weak and impulsive, her work, like the work of her great men, is terribly clear, firm and concise, precise edges and contours. There is no letting go or picking here and there; but accuracy and categorical voluntarism. Purified facts.”⁶⁰ While notions of ‘firm, concise and precise’ urbanism seems to be the product of Western culture and “*esprit cartésien*”⁶¹ – as Le Corbusier continues – it is paradoxical that the pentapole as city-form was borrowed from the M’Zab. Algiers, and, the continuation of the meridian southwards to El Golea and Gao (Fig. 25b), are in the tension between a lesson of the pentapole learned in the desert, and its application as a project of aggrandisement of France. Very much a colonial project⁶², however, not in the terms of traditional post-colonial critique.

The post-colonial critique has approached the Meridien in terms of imposition, reading the meridian as a colonial axis. This is the case professor Çelik, who describes the drawing quoting Coterau, an engineer working for the city of Algiers in 1933: “the city must be renovated by means of a ‘sane architecture, following Aryan traditions’, because of ‘its position on the axis of France’”⁶³. However, Le Corbusier’s meridian-pentapole-city shows a subtler form of colonialism that escapes these postcolonial accounts. Le Corbusier was not tracing an Aryan axis. The main paradox is that the line he was tracing was borrowed from the M’Zab. And this is not the typical way in which the colonialist was appropriating the other. Le Corbusier was not importing the cliché Orientalist ideas. It was not the set of ideas embedded in the classic Orientalist joke of the Weissenhofsiedlung becoming an ‘Arab village’, a satire of Modernist architecture – “at first friendly and humorous, then overtly racist”⁶⁴ (Fig. 26). Banal preconceived ideas are not here imported into European architecture. Neither the ideas are anymore generated back in France and imposed over the colony. The pentapole is read in the desert an incorporated back home. The most problematic aspect is that, at first, the moabite towns were conceived as an exterior to the modern metropolis in a moment of revelation. It was a space that indicted Paris. However,

scaling them out into the meridian, it was internalised in the form of a project of expansion of the empire, rather than critique to the metropolis.

In this movement between interior and exterior, it is important to understand the roles of the cities along the meridian, not only in the mercantile exchanges that Le Corbusier claimed when he wrote about them as “business-cities, centres of administrations designed to ensure the best exercise of an indisputable function: the *exchanges*.”⁶⁵ They can arguably be seen as functional cities of *exchanges*, but *intercultural* ones, as he saw the meridian in his first journey of 1931:

“Les échanges au long d’un parallèle terrestre ne sont que concurrence, lutte, struggle for life: industrialisme, mécanisme, perfectionnement haletant, etc...= sueur et douleur.

Les échanges au long d’un méridien terrestre sont: diversité, complémentaire, évolution harmonique. Il s’agit de produits déterminés par l’incidence des rayons solaires = à chaque fois harmonie entière, symphonique: cause – effet. = Alimentation de la curiosité, richesse spirituelle, unité mathématique = sensualité et philosophie.

[The exchanges along a terrestrial parallel are only competition, conflict, struggle for life: industrialism, mechanism, breathless perfection, etc ... = sweat and pain. The exchanges along a terrestrial meridian are: diversity, complementarity, harmonic evolution. They are products determined by the incidence of solar rays = always entire harmony, symphonic: cause – effect. = Food of curiosity, spiritual wealth, mathematical unity = sensuality and philosophy.]”⁶⁶

In this meridian of exchange, it is interesting to see the relation of “complementarity, harmonic evolution” between Paris and Algiers. One was the mirror of the other, completing what the other was missing. Paris and Algeria were interchanging, and even ‘interchangeable’. This is the case of the first manuscript for the *Poésie sur Alger* kept in the Fondation Le Corbusier in which the text is headed by a crossed out “~~Poésie sur Paris~~”⁶⁷ (Fig. 27). Algiers was



Orig. u. Text ges. gesch.

— Schwäbischer Kunst-Verlag Hirs Boettcher, Stuttgart —



70- Stalk

14.



1940 Stuttgart, Weissenhofsiedlung, Arabertorf

A3 -7 365

1 | Poésie sur Alger
~~1er mai 1942~~ 1er mai 1942
Poésie sur Paris
~~1er juin 1942~~

Mayol Pol Forché m'a mis en demeure d'écrire
 pour "Fontaine".

"Fontaine" est un ^{livre} ~~livre~~ de ~~grâce~~ ^{grâce} ouvert aux
 vanneaux poétiques d'une France étouffée de
 conséquences d'une vie de défaite, - France mise
 sur le fenou, un beau jour, et c'est force de
 l'être laissé faire, par la grande ^{due} ~~goussat~~ ^{goussat}
 d'une fin de première ^{due} ~~ère~~ ^{ère} ~~maison~~ ^{maison} ~~maison~~
 marchand ^{domin} ~~raient~~, les purs et les ~~ferme~~ ^{ferme} ~~raient~~
 n'étant pas ~~les~~ ^{sur} ~~ce~~ ^{ce} ~~maison~~ ^{maison}. ~~Fon~~ ^{Fon} ~~cœur~~ ^{cœur} ~~ant~~
 trépass ~~trépass~~, académie aux ~~postes~~ ^{postes} ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~commande~~
 (l'été ~~hellène~~ ^{hellène} ~~permanente~~ ^{permanente} ~~virtute~~). Une
 telle circonstance, alors ~~provoque~~ ^{provoque} ~~la~~ ^{la} ~~faute~~ ^{faute} ~~dental~~
 rétabli ~~comme~~ ^{comme} ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~valer~~ ^{valer} ~~adomant~~ ^{adomant} ~~la~~ ^{la} ~~peur~~ ^{peur}, a la
 parole, au ~~lyrisme~~ ^{lyrisme} ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~être~~ ^{être} ~~mot~~ ^{mot} ~~teurs~~ ^{teurs}, de ~~désir~~ ^{désir} ~~de~~
 l'autre ~~don~~ ^{don} ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~réincarnation~~ ^{réincarnation} ~~la~~ ^{la} ~~direction~~ ^{direction} ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~la~~ ^{la} ~~trajictoni~~
 de ~~tira~~ ^{tira} ~~les~~ ^{les} ~~les~~ ^{les} ~~nécessités~~ ^{nécessités} ~~l'effort~~ ^{l'effort} ~~du~~ ^{du} ~~pays~~
 de ~~lever~~ ^{lever} ~~les~~ ^{les} ~~forces~~ ^{forces} ~~d'enthousiasme~~ ^{d'enthousiasme}, les élans du
 cœur, de ~~provoquer~~ ^{provoquer} ~~ces~~ ^{ces} ~~gestes~~ ^{gestes} ~~désintéressés~~ ^{désintéressés}, ~~et~~ ^{et} ~~gratuits~~
 qui ~~font~~ ^{font} ~~la~~ ^{la} ~~desus~~ ^{desus} ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~la~~ ^{la} ~~vie~~ ^{vie}, qui ~~font~~ ^{font} ~~la~~ ^{la} ~~fin~~ ^{fin} ~~de~~
 compte, le ~~joie~~ ^{joie} ~~même~~ ^{même}, le ~~rayonnement~~ ^{rayonnement}, le ~~bonheur~~
 Elever, les ~~hommes~~ ^{hommes} ~~au~~ ^{au} ~~dehors~~ ^{dehors} ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~platitude~~ ^{platitude} ~~et~~

Fig. 27- Le Corbusier, Manuscript for Poésie sur Alger. 1er mai
 1942. Poésie sur Paris 1er juin 1942. FLC A3-7-365-001
 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

a poem on Paris. While partly this Parisian titling was due to Max Pol – editor of *Fontaine* where it was to be published – who requested from Le Corbusier a text on the French capital; it was also a way of framing the discussion on Algeria that was to follow an introduction on the problems of the current European city⁶⁸. It was a section that lamented the tormented metropolis, to which the North Africa was a lyrical solution. The Parisian section was published with slight changes as *Paris-été 1942*⁶⁹, where it reads as a disconnected reflection from the rest of the argument of *Les Trois Établissements Humaine* (1943)⁷⁰. However, in the final published version of the *Poem on Algiers*, the Parisian analysis is reduced to the succinct diagnosis “les villes sont malades de la peste... [cities are sick with the plague]”⁷¹, a tribute to his friend Albert Camus, and his *La Peste* [The Plague] – who he met in the first Algerian journey in 1931⁷². Le Corbusier was referring to Paris, Camus was setting his story in Oran, Algeria⁷³.

This meridian-wise form of interchanges was graphically expressed at some point between the Christmas of 1932 and the beginning of 1933⁷⁴ – as his personal notes indicate. Rapidly roughed out over the back of the front cover of his sketchbook, Le Corbusier traced the outlines of Europe and Africa, remarking the presence of the Parisian and Algerian dots (Fig. 28). The line connects the exchanges. However, among the scribbled capitals, other two dots trace linkages with the two. A network that appears more legible skipping some twenty pages of the sketchbook (Fig. 29). In this second drawing, the two dots appear in the Iberian and Italian peninsulas, drawing Europe towards the Mediterranean Sea. Overpassing the continental outlines that separate Europe and North Africa, a hatched profile circumscribes the four dots extending their field down into the desert. The continuum field of exchanges is now not only meridian-wise, but thickens to integrate Barcelona and Rome. A quadrilateral scheme in which Algiers was to become the “Islamic *pole*”⁷⁵[my emphasis] of Mediterranean cultural exchanges. This quadrapolar locus eventually became the graphic illustration at the back of the dust jacket of the *Poésie sur Alger*.

(previous page)
Fig. 26- Postcard,
Araberdorf -
Fotomontage mit
Weissenhofsiedlung,
Stuttgart (Arab
Village -
Photomontage
with the
Weissenhof
Housing
Development,
Stuttgart).
Published in
Schwäbisches
Heimatsbuch,
1941. Stuttgart,
Stadtarchiv.

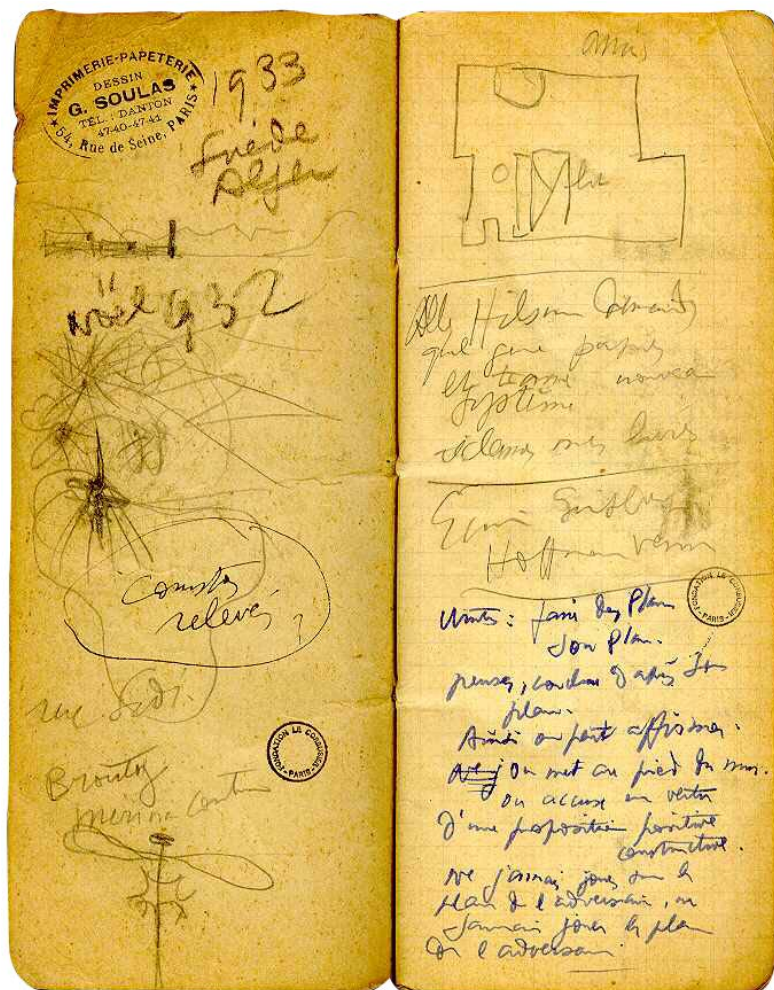
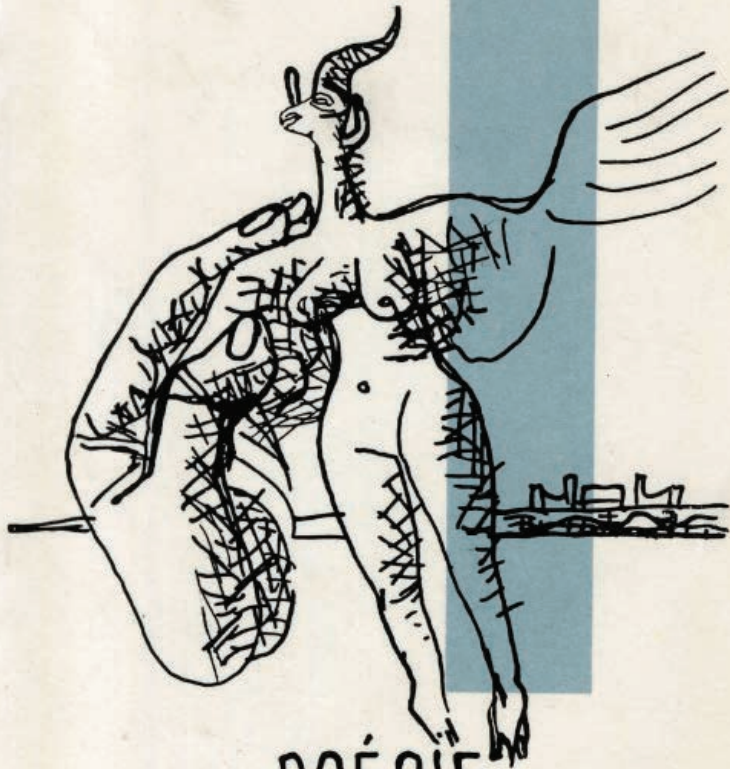


Fig. 28- Le Corbusier- Back of front cover and first page of sketchbook. F3-5-5. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

LE CORBUSIER



POÉSIE
SUR
ALGER

P
B R
A

(facing page)
Fig. 30- Le
Corbusier,
Cover for *Poésie
sur Alger*. 1989,
fac-similé of
original 1950
edition.

Paris, Barcelona, Rome, Algiers. It is only symptomatic that for Le Corbusier, his project was not colonial. As he wrote to Mr. Brunnel, mayor of the town, “‘Algiers ceases to be a colonial city’ and becomes ‘the head of Africa. Its capital.’”⁷⁶ The notion of alignment of Algiers with France was already the existing colonial status. What was not part of the colonial way was what Le Corbusier brought from the desert, the capacity for drawing together the different poles into one single pentapole project. It was the internalisation of a revelation in the desert that was new for colonial practice. Perhaps the most colonial of his mindset was not in the quadrilateral scheme of the back dust-jacket, but rather what he drew in the front one (Fig. 30).

Turning the volume upside down, the reader faces the *femme à la licorne*, upright floating over the Algerian sky as monstrous figure. It is this drawing that condenses a project subtler in its appropriation of the other. Backgrounded by an early proposal for the Obus Plan of Algiers, a light blue blotch cross vertically in-between them. Not that different to the lithographic patch that accompanies the *Meridien Paris – El Golea – Gao* (Fig. 22). The horned woman appears as mysterious figure introducing the lyricism of the country. In this, Le Corbusier operated an interesting movement away from politics into poetics⁷⁷. It was not a literal political project – which had failed when the council didn’t approve the Obus Plan – but a way of doing colonialism in a different realm. Despite its nostalgic tone, the publication of the poem as book in 1950 – exhuming a manuscript that have been unpublished since 1942 – was prompted by the prospect of a new journey to the country in April 1949, now moving within a context in which the *directeur départemental de l’urbanisme*, as well as certain

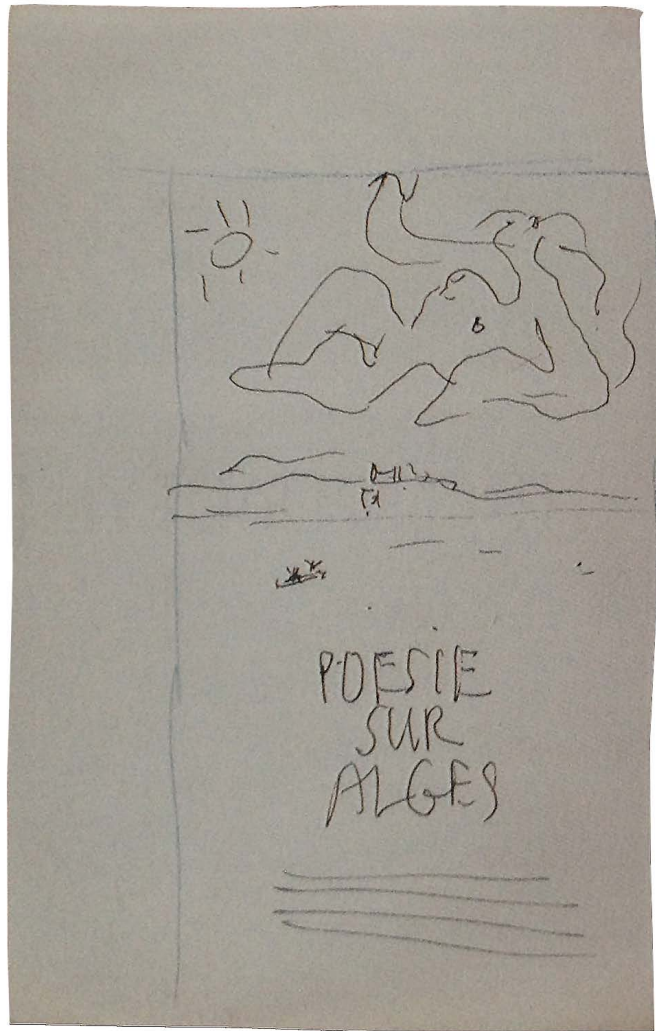


Fig. 31- Le Corbusier- Project for the cover of Poésie sur Alger. FCL A3(7)438.©Fondation Le Corbusier

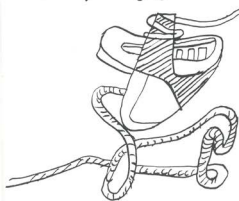
renowned architects in the country, were supportive of his ideas⁷⁸. The political interest was there. However, it failed again. The journey never happened, and the project remained spurned. The next discourse, then, was a lyrical one. “La poésie qui est, en fin de compte, M. le Gouverneur, M. le Préfet, M. le Maire, la nourriture essentielle des peuples (...) la poésie best sur Alger, prête à s’incarner dans les faits urbanistiques et architecturaux. [Poetry is, at the end of the day, Mr. Governor, Mr. Prefect, Mr. Mayor, the essential nourishment of the people (...) poetry is in Algiers, ready to enter, to materialise in urban and architectural facts.]”⁷⁹, as the lines close the *Poem*.

The cover itself also moved the colonial question from politics to poetics. In early versions of the cover, the *femme* lies as a symbol suspended over the city, her body curvatures mirroring the landscape of Algiers viewed from the sea (Fig. 31). “Algiers drops out of sight like a magnificent body, supple-hipped and full-breasted. ... A body which could be revealed in all its magnificence, through the judicious influence of form and the bold use of mathematics to harmonize natural topography and human geometry”⁸⁰, as Le Corbusier described in *La Ville Radiuse*. While this version could be read in consonance with Orientalist ideas of Algiers as feminised mistress of France⁸¹, the final version points to something else. The final *femme à la licorne*, armed in her horned and winged mythical creature, stands erected against the succumbed position of the oriental *femme*. In the text of *La Ville Radiuse*, Le Corbusier was then describing it from a boat; a coastal panorama. After the experience of a desert flight, the *femme* becomes winged, hybrid. It is as if the *femme à la licorne* had won her wings in the desert experience. When five years after the *Poem on Algiers*, Le Corbusier published *Le Poems de L’Angle Droit* (1955), the *femme à la licorne* appears thrice (Fig. 32 & 33). The first time with a text accompanying that describes,

“One can be two and being two
be unable to conjugate things
it is essential to
bring together each

qu'insupportable de deux chemins
particuliers subitement marquée
d'une étonnante félicité.

On peut être deux et à deux
et ne pas conjuguer les choses



qu'il serait fondamental de
mettre en présence chacun
Rêlas, bien aveugle ne voyant
pas ce qu'il tient d'ineffable
à bout de bras. Inerte!



le plan de l'allégresse

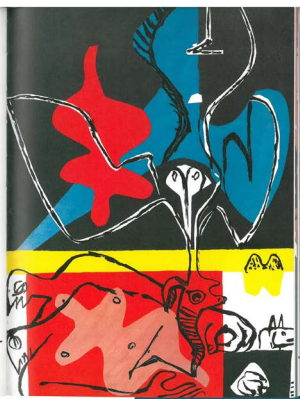


pupilles ouvertes que les regards
croisés ont pu conduire à
l'acte fondoyant de communion:
"l'épanouissement les grands
francs".....

La mer est redescendue
au bas de la marée pour
pouvoir remonter à l'heure.
Un temps neuf s'est ouvert
une étape un délai un relai



Alors ne serons-nous pas
devenus amis à côté de nos vies



alas quite blind not
 seeing the ineffable something
 which he holds at arm's length. Inert!"⁸²

(facing page)
 Fig. 32- Le
 Corbusier, *Le*
Poeme de L'Angle

While the poetic language here doesn't help exegesis, one may argue that the experience in the desert, of thirst and satiety, of 'vision' and 'blindness' were crucial for Le Corbusier's understanding of Algeria. Especially pointing that, to the left of her illustration, a twister engulfing a minaret-like tower recalls the sketches for the flight over the M'Zab (Fig. 14 & 35). In the first journey, Le Corbusier was too blind to see 'the ineffable something', the lesson of the desert. It is only in the 1933 flight that it was revealed, bringing it into a 'conjugated' unity – arguably the *femme à la licorne* as depicted flying over the two continents through the meridian (Fig. 36 a). It was not the colonial project of imposing the one over the other, the centre over the periphery. His project was about conjugating, of combining one and the other. He had discovered the other in the desert, and what he saw showed him that cities could be coupled together into a pentapole scheme. Bringing together would become the key colonial process, far beyond any imposed failed Obus Plan. What was discovered in the desert flight is now internalised as hybrid; la *femme à la licorne* is liminal between Algeria and France; the oasis and the metropolis.

Droit. 2012.
 Ostfildern,
 Germany, Hatje
 Cantz. pp. 82-
 83.
 Fig. 33-Le
 Corbusier, *Le*
Poeme de L'Angle
Droit. 2012.
 Ostfildern,
 Germany, Hatje
 Cantz. pp.
 108-109 / 116-
 117.

The last intervention of the she-monster in the poem goes,

"It is through the doors of
 Open eyes that looks
 Exchanged have led to
 The flash of communication
 (...)
 The sea has gone out the
 Tide at low ebb will
 rise again in time
 A new time has begun
 a phase a limit a transition
 And thus we shall not
 Have mistaken our lives."

While a colonialist political programme is hard to ascertain in a 319

versifying Corbusier, the ‘exchanges’, the ‘sea being modified’, point to the ‘meridian times’ as a possibility; the drawing of the Meridian as locus of intercultural exchanges. The paradoxical aspect is that he had been revealed that possibility in a flight over the desert. While these exchanges had been envisioned in the desert as exterior, as critique, they are now interiorised, versified and personified in the *femme à la licorne*.

Following the aerial route of the *femme à la licorne*, along the meridian, northwards from the desert, to the sea, to its final hybrid bird-woman, one cannot help seeing in the Algerian sphinx the always missing self-portrait of Le Corbusier. If Gabor Naphegyi pre-faced the first book of Ghardaïa with a self-confident conquest of the sand – not missing Orientalist paraphernalia – (Fig. 1); Le Corbusier’s conquest of Algeria is a subtler one: the internalisation of the oasis experience into his persona as a hybrid *femme*.

Endnotes

1. Le Corbusier, 'Coupe en Travers. Retours...ou L'Enseignement du Voyage' in *Plans*. Oct. 1931. Paris. p. 104.
2. Çelik, Zeynep. *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations*. 1997. Los Angeles, California. University of California Press. p. 76.
3. The portrait illustrates Naphegyi, Gabor. *Ghardaia Or, Ninety Days Among the B'Ni Mozab*. New York, G. P. Putnam. 1871.
4. Title of the article 'Dr. Gabor Naphegyi, the Most Brilliant Imposter' published in *The Old Commonwealth*, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 28th January 1875, p. 1.
5. Gerber, Alex. *L'Algerie de Le Corbusier. Les Voyages de 1931*. These n° 1077 (1992) Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne. 1993.
6. Le Corbusier. *Aircraft*. London, The Studio Publications Inc. 1935. p.13.
7. See note 1.
8. Gerber, Alex. *Le Corbusier et le mirage de l'Orient. L'influence supposée de l'Algérie sur son œuvre architecturale* in *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée, Figures de l'orientalisme en architecture*, n°73-74, 1994. p. 366.
9. Even Le Corbusier, not having studied in a school of architecture, conceived his journey as his architectural education, writing about himself in third person: "At nineteen, LC sets out for Italy, 1907 Budapest, Vienna; in Paris February 1908, 1910 Munich, then Berlin. 1911, knapsack on back: Prague, Danube, Serbia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey (Constantinople), Asia Minor. Twenty-one days at Mount Athos. Athens, Acropolis six weeks.... Such was L-C's school of architecture. It had provided his education, opening doors and windows before him – into the future." (LeCorbusier, *My Work*. London, Architectural Press. 1960. p. 50.
10. Le Corbusier, 1931. p. 105. Le Corbusier's emphasis.
11. Ibid. p. 103.
12. Le Corbusier, 1931. p. 92.
13. ibid. p.106.
14. ibid.
15. ibid. p. 104.
16. Gerber, Alex. 1993.
17. Mercier, Marcel. *La Civilisation Urbaine au Mzab*. 1922. Alger. Émile Pfister. p.5.
18. ibid. p. 6.
19. ibid. p.7.

20. *ibid.*
21. *ibid.* p. 45
22. Le Corbusier, '25 août 1931, CÉJ Alger à Yvonne, Lettre avec en-tête: HOTEL D'ANGLATERRE. ALGER' in Baudouin, Remi & Dercelles, Arnaud. *Le Corbusier. Correspondance. Lettres à la Famille 1926-1946. Tome II.* 2013. Paris. Infolio éditions. p. 355.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.* '30 août 1931, CÉJ et Pierre à Yvonne, Paris. Carte postale illustrée avec légende <<528 GHARDAIA - Caravane ou repos>>.'
25. The letter is addressed to the Ville Le Lac, Corseaux, Switzerland.
26. *Ibid.* '30 août 1931, CÉJ et Pierre à la mère. Carte postale illustrée avec légende <<484 GHARDAIA - Un puits au M'Zab.>> p. 356.
27. Le Corbusier. 1931. p. 107.
28. Le Corbusier. 'A Frontispiece to Pictures of the Epic of the Air' in *Aircraft*. 1935. London. The Studio Publications Inc. p. 12. With some minor modifications, the story of his flight over the M'Zab was published again in Le Corbusier, *Sur les 4 Routes*. 1941 (text signed in 1939). Paris, Éditions Gallimard. pp. 122-125.
29. cf. Colomina, Beatriz. *Toward a Global Architect in Architects' Journeys. Building, Traveling, Thinking*. Pamplona, Spain & New York. T6) ediciones & GSAPP Books. 2011. pp. 34 & 36.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
31. cf. *ibid.*, p. 29.
32. Le Corbusier, sketches 688–90, 3March 1961, in *Le Corbusier Sketchbooks*, vol. 4. as quoted in Colomina, Beatriz, 2011. p. 29.
33. Durafour's plane was registered under the name 'F-Amir'. cf. http://www.airhistory.org.uk/gv/reg_F-11.html
34. cf. Houard, Georges. *Les Ailes : journal hebdomadaire de la locomotion aérienne*. 20 Nov. 1932. p. 7.
35. Banham, Reynier. *Memories of a persistent air-traveller* in *Interior Design*. Feb. 1968. p.30.
36. cf. Houard, Georges. 1932. p. 7.
37. Le Corbusier. *Vers une Architecture*. Paris, Les Éditions G. Crès et Cie. 1925. p. 81.
38. Letter from the director of The Studio Ltd. to Le Corbusier, 9th May 1935. Item FLC B3-14-23 in Fondation Le Corbusier.

39. cf. *ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*

41. Le Corbusier's book belong to a longer series titled *The New Vision* in which the editors of The Studio proposed that "each book in the series should be devoted to one characteristic section of contemporary design in industry, dealing with the new forms that have been created as the result of the efforts of engineer, architect, designer and technician, (...) for example, devot[ing] one such book to aeroplanes, another to locomotives and so on." Letter from the director of The Studio Ltd. to Le Corbusier, 16th January 1935. Item FLC B3-14-1 in Fondation Le Corbusier.

42. Indra Kagis has interestingly argued about the origins of architecture in Daedalus' design of the labyrinth in Knossos for King Minos in McEwen, Indra Kagis. *Socrates' Ancestor: an essay on architectural beginnings*. London, MIT Press. 1993.

43. Le Corbusier, 1935. p.5. Le Corbusier prefaces the title of the book with "L'avion accuse..." (p. 3) and he states that "And, justly stirred, advised moreover by my friend the poet Pierre Guéguen, to whom I showed the draft of this book, I have added my own title "The airplane indicts." (p. 5) and insists in the same idea in p. 11.

Also published as section title – 'L'avion accuse' – within the 'aviation route' in Le Corbusier, *Sur les 4 Routes*. 1941 (text signed in 1939). Paris, Éditions Gallimard. pp. 121-125.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

46. cf. Gerber, Alex. 1993. p. 297 & 366 and Mercier, Marcel. 1922. p.36.

47. Le Corbusier. *The radiant city: elements of a doctrine of urbanism to be used as the basis of our machine-age civilization*. London, Faber and Faber. 1967. p. 232.

48. Adnan Morshed. "The Cultural Politics of Aerial Vision: Le Corbusier in Brazil (1929)", *Journal of Architectural Education* Vol. 55, No. 4 (May 2002): 207.

49. M. Christine Boyer has noted the triggering of the Meridian drawing from Le Corbusier's aerial experience, however, her text doesn't show any connection between the Meridian and the pentapole city of the M'Zab. cf. Boyer, M. Christine. *Aviation and the Aerial View: Le Corbusier's Spatial Transformations in the 1930s and 1940s* in *Diacritics*. Autumn-Winter 2003. Vol. 33. No. 3/4. p. 114.

50. Le Corbusier, *Poésie sur Alger*. 1950. Paris, Falaize.

51. cf. Fondation Le Corbusier, items A3-7-365-001 to A3-7-365-017.
52. Baudouï, Rémi, *Poésie sur Alger, Histoire d'un Ouvrage* in Le Corbusier, *Poésie sur Alger*. 2013. Hydra, Algeria, Barzakh Ed, p. 62.
53. cf. Le Corbusier, *Poésie sur Alger*. 2016, reprint of 1950, translated into English and German. Ostfildern, Germany, Hatje Cantz. p. 1942.
54. cf. Cantone, Cleo. *Postface, Le Corbusier and the Allure of Africa* in *ibid.* p. 55.
55. cf. Baudouï, Rémi. 2013. p. 77 as well as Cantone, Cleo. 2016. p. 55; and Smet, Catherine de. *Réparation poético-plastique. À propos de Poésie sur Alger* in *Le Corbusier, visions d'Alger/ sous la direction de Jean-Lucien Bonillo*. 2012. Paris, Éditions de la Villette, Fondation Le Corbusier. p. 189-91.
56. Le Corbusier produced at least seven different plans for the city. cf. Le Corbusier. 2016. p. 50.
57. Le Corbusier. *Manière de Penser l'Urbanisme. Soigner la ville malade*. 1977. Paris, Gonthier. p. 128-129.
58. *Ibid.* 124.
59. cf. *Ibid.*, p.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 131. Translation by the author.
61. *Ibid.*
62. cf. Çelik, Zeynep. *Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism in Assemblage*. April 1992, no. 17. pp. 58-77; as well as Curtis, William. *Modern Architecture since 1900*. 1990. Englewood Cliffs, N.J, Prentice Hall. p. 190.
63. As quoted in *ibid.* p. 66.
64. Cohen, Jean-Louis. *Architectural History and the Colonial Question: Casablanca, Algiers and Beyond* in *Architectural History* vol. 49, 2006. Pp. 349-372.
65. cf. note 68.
66. Le Corbusier. 1931. p. 102.
67. FLC A3-7-365-001.
68. cf. Smet, Catherine de. 2012. p. 191-92.
69. cf. Baudouï, Rémi. 2013. p. 62.
70. cf. Monteys Roig, Xavier & Fuertes Perez, Pere. *Le Corbusier. Streets, Promenades, Scenes and Artefacts* in *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*. 2016 Vol. 40, no.2. p. 153.
71. cf. Le Corbusier. 2016. p. 11.
72. cf. Baudouï, Rémi. 2013. p. 63.
73. cf. Camus, Albert. *La Peste*. 1947. Paris, Gallimard. Camus was studying

the history of the plague in Oran since October 1931, finishing the novel in January 1943. cf. Baudouï, Rémi. 2013. p. 63.

74. cf. dating noted in FLC F3-3-5-5-002. Both 'noel 932' and '1933' seem to be written with the same pencil, while there are blue pen remarks and harder pencil text and sketches.

75. Cantone, Cleo. *Postface, Le Corbusier and the Allure of Africa* in Le Corbusier, 2016. p. 57.

76. Le Corbusier, 'Urbanisation de la ville d'Alger, 1931-34' in *Oeuvre complète, 1929-34*. 1935. Zurich, Girsberger. p. 174. as quoted in Cantone, Cleo. 2016. p.57.

77. cf. Smet, Catherine de. 2012. p. 197.

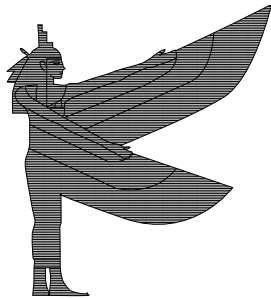
78. cf. Baudouï, Rémi. 2013. p.75.

79. Le Corbusier. 2016. p. 46.

80. Le Corbusier. 1967. p. 260.

81. cf. Celik, Zeynep. 1992. p. 72.

82. Le Corbusier, *Le Poeme de L'Angle Droit*. 2012. Ostfildern, Germany, Hatje Cantz. pp. 82-83.



Excursus on Arabia Deserta II

Eyes that do not see – Desert

Sheba, 1934



When looking for the capital of the Queen of Sheba in Paris, I was, at least, the third in the queue. The second was André Malraux who wrote a fantastic series of articles on his discovery of the city, overflying its ruins in the desert in March, 1934. But in that piece of news he was not following her majesty, but actually the shadow of Joseph Arnaud, the true European pioneer on traversing the ruins of Sheba¹. Clearly, searching for the city of the queen in the archives of Paris I was not looking for discovery in the sense of novelty; I was late, roughly, for a century and a half. Not even discovery in the sense of removing the cloth, rescuing forgotten archived material. After having worked with the maps of the Royal Geographical Society and the drawings of Le Corbusier, my question was rather in pondering the validity of seeing the desert through the other's eyes. Having been writing about vision in the desert, it was crucial to understand its limits, its blind-spots. Reading how Malraux defined his journey as following 'the shadow of Arnaud', I had the feeling that there was a lot of penumbra between me and the desert, layers of obscurity between me and the sun.

A slight glimpse of hope came, though, with the drawings of Arnaud. He was a pharmacist from the low Alps working in Egypt. In the summer of 1843, he joined a Turkish embassy that went to visit the Imam of Yemen, quartered in Sana'a at the time². Eventually he managed to venture inland to the centre of Arabia in search of Ma'rib, the ancient capital of the Sabaeans, city of the queen of Sheba. There he took some notes on the ruins and – most importantly for modern archaeology – copies of inscriptions on the walls³. However, the way back was perilous, having to disguise himself as vendor of candles, protecting his valuable papers until eventually he found safety in Jeddah where Fulgence Fresnel was consul. His inscriptions were transcribed by Fresnel who then lost them before the publication of Arnaud's journey in the *Journal Asiatique*⁴. Years later the drawings were found by Jules Mohl – editor of the journey – who deposited them in the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1873. Arnaud's story could be considered a classic of Arabian incursions: pioneer, disguise, arduous wandering back home in which he even lost his sight...Nothing would

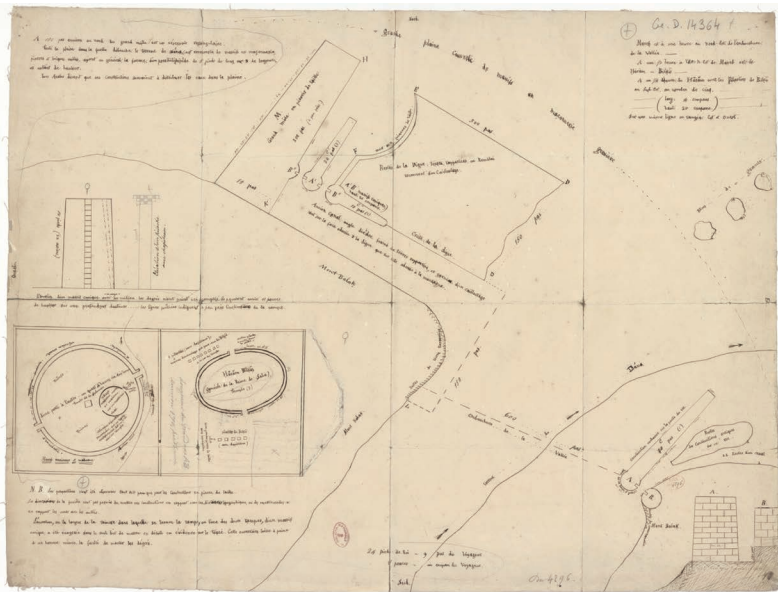
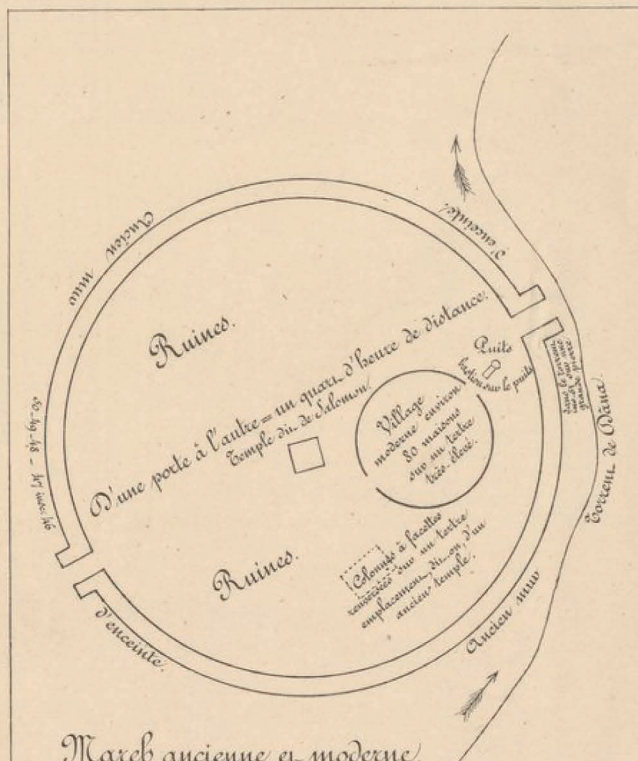


Fig 1- Arnaud, Joseph. *Plan de la digue de Mareb et des ruines de la ville de Saba, dans le midi de l'Arabie / Fait par Mr. Th. Joseph Arnaud en 1843.* © BnF



Mari ancienne et moderne.

Mari est à une heure au Nord-Est de l'embouchure de la vallée.

À une $\frac{1}{2}$ heure à l'Est-N. Est de Mari est le Kāram Bilkio.

À un $\frac{1}{4}$ d'heure du Kāram sont les pilastres de Bilkio au Sud-Est, au nombre de cinq

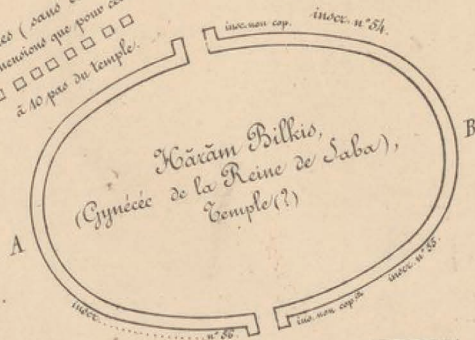
(larg. 4 empanes
haut. 28 empanes)

sur une même ligne ou rangée Est ou Ouest.

Ce. D. 14364 (8)

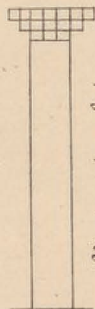
8 pilastres (sans chapiteaux),
mêmes dimensions que pour ceux de Bilkis,
à 10 pas du temple.

autres pilastres
à moitié dans
le sable.



Zone grande pilastre de Bilkis
avec inscription.

Pilastres de Bilkis
(avec chapiteaux)



Elevation d'un pilastre
avec chapiteau.

Longueur du grand axe AB
environ 170 pieds.



Don 4190

(previous page)
 Fig. 2- Arnaud,
 Joseph. *Plan de la
 digue de Mareb et des
 ruines de la ville de
 Saba, dans le midi
 de l'Arabie / Fait
 par Mr. Th. Joseph
 Arnaud en 1843.*
 Ink drawings from
 the original. ©
 BnF

make him remarkably different to be considered here, once we have seen the journeys of Burton and Palgrave. Except that his drawings were never published during his lifetime⁵. While following similar itinerary – until they got split in 1844 – they did not appear in his published travelogues⁶.

So, when I saw them for the first time siting in the reading room of the Bibliothèque Nationale, I had a certain feeling of closing a journey. A first impression on opening them came with the fold marks in the paper left by years of oblivion; but overall by the months of disguised wandering in which the large – roughly half-metre – sheet had to be secluded in a slightly larger than pocket size format (Fig. 1). Nevertheless, this feeling quickly changed as my eyes stumbled upon two square-framed sketches within the page. They were the free-hand lines that Arnaud drafted after his visit. The circular and elliptical outlines demarcate its walls, with the distances measured in time – ‘D’une porte à l’autre=un quars d’heure de distance [From one gate to the other=a quarter of an hour apart]’ – or in his own hands – ‘les pilastres de Bilkis(...)larg. 4 empan, haut. 28 empanel [Bilkis pilasters (...) width 4 handspans, height 28 handspans]’. The impression was now eerie because of the geometrical precision of the ellipse and the circle, despite the difficult conditions under which they were produced⁷. Arnaud’s hand was replicating in paper what his eyes had witnessed. But for me, it was as if the eye-like plans of ‘Mareb, ancienne et modern [Ma’rib, ancient and modern]’ (Fig. 2) weirdly resembled the ceiling above my head. It was as if the lit domes of the Salle Labrouste of the Bibliothèque Nationale were a gigantic metonym of my question, the *oculi* reflecting on my interest in desert travellers, the sun and their eyes (Fig. 3). How much had the hand translated what the hard sun put in the travellers’ eye?

But I said that this kind of discovery of unpublished material was not of my interest this time. The final impression I had from Arnaud’s drawings was a much more banal one, realising the connection between his plan and the drawing that Malraux produced during the publication of his articles (Fig. 4). Despite its humorous

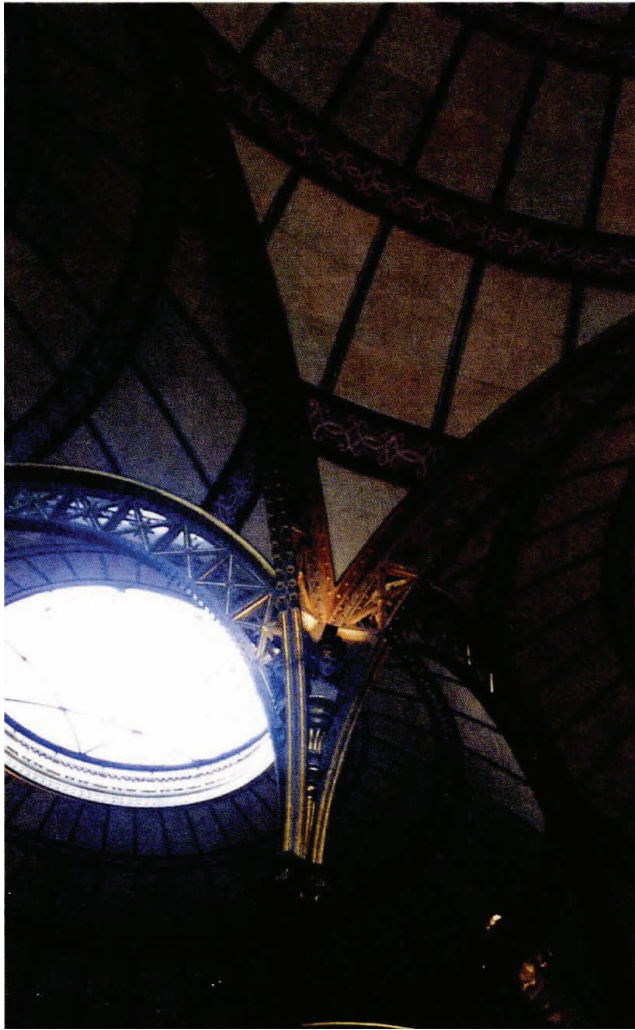


Fig. 3- Labrouste, Henri. *Bibliothèque Nationale, Richelieu*.
Photo by the author.

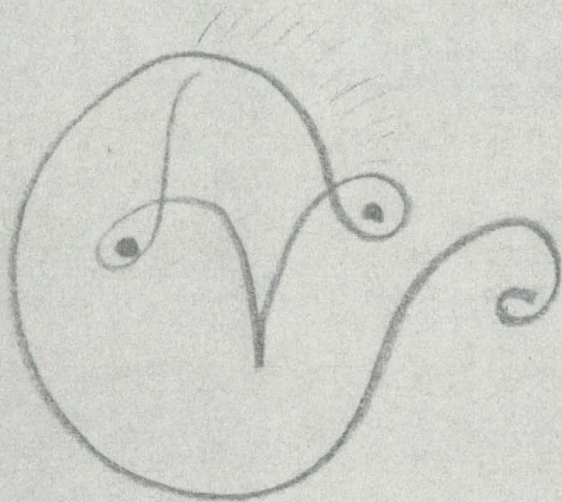
(facing page)
 Fig. 4- Malraux,
 André. *Saba
 Légendaire*. May, 6
 1934 in Malraux,
 André. *La Reina
 de Saba. Una
 aventura geográfica*.
 2011. Barcelona,
 Ediciones
 Peninsula.

character, it actually accentuated the seriousness of my question. A continuous silhouette, being portrait, plan and aerial itinerary at the same time; ‘Saba Légendaire’ scribbled on top as the title of the episode in the newspaper in which he finally reaches the city. But in this cartographic joke, what the hand-line juts out are the eyes. Being very unlikely that Malraux’s imagination of the queen is reflected in this caricature – especially knowing his admiration for Flaubert’s flamboyant monarch⁸ – what remains is to see it as self-portrait of a sort. Of course, on finding Ma’rib, the threat for Malraux was to find the eyes of the queen wide-open, as in the Bible it is said that on the last day she will wake up⁹. Seeing her eyes would mean his final sight. Arnaud didn’t seem to care much about apocalyptic foresights. But in the case of Malraux, as opposed to Arnaud moving by donkey, his eyes were airborne. Aerial, perpendicular to the ground, mirror image of Arnaud’s plan. And the texts with which they narrate their discovery of the city are also worlds apart. Arnaud’s report was transcribed in a total of 141-pages in a series of archaeological articles which focused more on the hieroglyphical unearthing than in the adventurous aspects¹⁰. The reading of Malraux’s flight is a much lighter one. A series of seven episodes in the newspaper *L’Intransigeant* during the Spring of 1934, the first page is searching for capturing readers as much as for Sheba. But nevertheless, Malraux did his homework, reading Arnaud’s narrative before departure. In fact, consulting his papers he fell in love with his story. It is true that his project of a royal search in Arabia was prior to knowing his predecessor. However, when Doctor Jean-Baptiste Charcot mentioned the story of the French pharmacist, the obsession turned towards the queen and the disguised doctor¹¹. Malraux found in him the puzzling mix of the character’s extravagances and his misfortunes in the peninsula. He particularly appreciated the figure of Arnaud’s hermaphrodite donkey – with which he wandered in the desert after discovering the city¹² – which brought together the ordinariness of the rural French character and the exoticism of Arabia¹³.

At the time of his research on Arnaud, Malraux had returned

Manuscript de

Saba ligendani



Isi Mahony.

5 Nov 1894

from Indochina where he had founded the newspaper *L'Indochine* in support of the Annam Young movement against the colonial regime¹⁴. And having recently received the Prix Goncourt for his novel *La Condition Humaine* [The Human Condition]¹⁵, he convinced the editors of the *L'Intransigent* newspaper to publish a series of reportages on his search for the exotic lost city. This way he secured the finances; but he needed the means of transport. At first the adventure was conceived as retracing the steps of Arnaud disguised as a Persian¹⁶. However, consulting with his friend the pilot Corniglion-Molinier convinced him of the *démodé* character of his plans. As Corniglion-Molinier recounted in *L'Intransigent*:

“Je lui dis: ‘Je trouve parfaitement ridicule d’augmenter la liste des savants ou des aventuriers romantiques tués dans cette expédition, alors qu’il existe aujourd’hui une chance beaucoup plus grande de trouver cette ville si elle existe: c’est l’avion.’ [I told him: ‘I find it ridiculous to increase the list of scholars or romantic adventurers killed on this expedition, when there is today a much greater chance of finding the city if it exists: the plane.]”¹⁷

Malraux got excited with the idea of updating disguise with the airplane as a means of expedition. And he promptly tried to convince Jean Mermoz and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – great flying chevaliers of the time – to engage in the search. *Aéropostale* did not allow to put its pilots at risk in vain¹⁸. So, finally Corniglion-Molinier himself, the mechanic Maillard, and a customised Farman 190 sufficed for the air adventure.

“Within few days, [Weiller’s] beautiful passenger plane [avion de tourisme], with profiled wheels, comfortable seats, electric start, central heating and cosy carpets became a machine with supplementary tanks, aggressive radiators, multiple and ugly pipes, thick tires, countless rounds and thermometers, unusual enormous compasses. (...) this [was an] aesthetic massacre, but necessary for the struggle with the hard African elements (...)”¹⁹

more in the modernising line of the Futurist, Malraux was to write his epic discovery as Marinetti his manifesto, “sitting on the gas tank of an airplane, my stomach warmed by the pilot’s head.”²⁰ On February 22, 1934, they departed from Paris en route to Sheba.

With the impossibility of camping in an Arabia peninsula forbidden by the Ottoman tensions, their base of operations was at Djibouti, the closest tip of the African horn. From there the plan was a ten-hour return flight, no planned stop on the journey, not even if they were to find the city. The aim was an aerial view. March, 7 on board the Farman 190, the three took off from the aerodrome warned against the possibility of not coming back²¹. Obviously, they did come back, but what they brought with them was not Sabaeen remains but the impressions in their retinas – that eventually became the articles in the newspaper –, a series of blurred photographs and a telegraph ready to be sent to France: “Discovered the legendary capital of the queen of Sheba *stop* twenty towers or temples standing *stop* in the northern border of Rub’Al-Khali *stop* pictures taken for *L’Intransigeant stop* regards. Corniglion-Malraux”²² It was that last statement that became geographical and fictionally crucial. Over their spiral movements around the ruins, Corniglion searched for a landing ground, though the dunes and rocks didn’t allow enough space. On top of it, the Bedouins started shooting at them. Therefore, only the aerial photographs were the proof of their finding. Back in France, they became the centre of the polemic. The four published photographs of the ruins (Fig. 5-7) show an oblique vision of the territory in which the soft curvature of the ground draws subtle hues of grey and black over the white background. The strong shadows of the ruins appear as black patterns with barely defined forms over the ground. Of course, serious doubts about the discovery were based on the fact that some of the published photographs were clearly ‘edited’²³.

The journey to the desert was never fully a question of what was there. The quest for Zerzura, Le Corbusier in the M’Zab or Malraux’s aerial sojourn point to the discrepancy between what was seen and what

was brought back to the metropolis. There was a disjunction between RGS 064937, the Meridien Paris- El Golea- Gao, as well as Malraux's articles, and what was witnessed in the journey. The question was in the eye of the beholder. This query became apparent to me when, after having seen the drawings of Arnaud, I read how Malraux wrote about his homecoming. After sneaking his way into Ma'rib, Arnaud had to make his return through the desert to the gates of Jeddah.

“He was suffering, then, a severe ophthalmia and when he reached the Hejaz, where Fresnel was consul, he was blind. He took his inscriptions to Fresnel. The latter translated them and sent them to the *Journal Asiatique*. And, in order to include drawings to the text, he asked Arnaud, to whom he was friendly hosting, to reproduce a drawing of the dam and the temples at Ma'rib. The blind hand did not manage to produce anything other than disperse lines and uniform butterflies. Then, Arnaud took Fresnel by the hand and was led to the beach. And there, lying on the wet sand, stretched next to his guide who was wondering where he was taking him, he remade with his hesitating and pressing hands the ditch that he now feels between his fingers, traces the oval temple of the sun, and digs with his index the rounded holes that simulate the broken bases of the columns. The Arabs look at this man that builds sand castles like the children and that they eventually respect as they consider him mad. And Fresnel quickly translates the derisive architecture that soon the sea will carry as if anything regarding Sheba, once rebuilt, needs to call the elements to take it back to eternity.”²⁴

While the beautiful story was also slightly ‘edited’ – fictionalised²⁵ – what it operates is a shift from vision into blindness. And three elements articulate the question: the eye, the hand and the sand.

Departing from this last one, Malraux's evocation of Arnaud recalls Foucault's “s’effacerait (...) comme à la limite de la mer un visage du sable [would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea]”²⁶ of the closing lines of *Les Mots et les choses* (1966). But if Foucault's cartoon points to oblivion, for Malraux's eternity is a question of keeping in mind. Perhaps, after all, his Sabaeans' ‘visage

DEMAIN LUNDI

la suite de nos enquêtes :

**A la recherche de la capitale
de la reine de Saba**

par André Malraux
et Corniglion-Molinier

Voyage autour de la vie chère

CROISIÈRE EN CORSE

Pentecôte 1934

organisée par

L'INTRANSIGEANT



Voir les détails page 7

Fig. 5- Advertisement in *L'Intransigeant* announcing the article
with the photographs to come the day after. May, 7th 1934. ©

BnF

AU-DESSUS DU DÉSERT D'ARABIE (5)

A la découverte de la capitale mystérieuse de la reine de Saba

Saba légendaire

par André MALRAUX



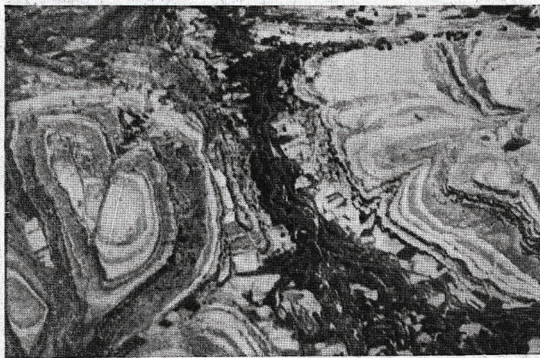
Le massif montagneux du Yémen franchi, le terrain commence à s'incliner vers le désert



L'immense étendue de la ville...

De la capitale mystérieuse de la reine de Saba à la Vallée des Tombeaux

par **André MALRAUX**



La vallée des Tombeaux (les tombeaux sont les petites taches noires le long de la fissure principale)

Administration
 Rédaction : 10, rue de Valenciennes
 Bureaux de Paris : 10, rue de Valenciennes
 France-Rhône : 10, rue de Valenciennes
 Abonnements : 10, rue de Valenciennes

*** Le Journal de Paris**

TROISIEME EDITION

Le Journal de Paris

L'INTRANSIGENT

LUNDI 10 MAI 1936
 10 MAI 1936
 10 MAI 1936
 10 MAI 1936

AU-DESSUS DU DESERT D'ARABIE
Dela capitale mystérieuse de la reine de Saba à la Vallée des Tombeaux
 Quand le désert se brise aux orbes des stupéfiants par André MAHIEU

De l'Arabie à la mer Rouge, par André MAHIEU.

Le Congrès radical s'ouvrira vendredi
 Les déclarations de M. Michel Bérard pour l'indépendance de la France

Le Congrès radical s'ouvrira vendredi à Paris. Les déclarations de M. Michel Bérard pour l'indépendance de la France.

Comment l'élégance 1934 : Une interview de M. ALEXANDRE de Turguine
 L'élégance 1934 : Une interview de M. ALEXANDRE de Turguine.

L'élégance 1934 : Une interview de M. ALEXANDRE de Turguine.

M. Paul Faure, M. Robert M. Ruffin, M. G. G. G.

Le problème de l'impôt est-il insoluble ?
 Le cas de cinéas du budget affaibli

Le cas de cinéas du budget affaibli.

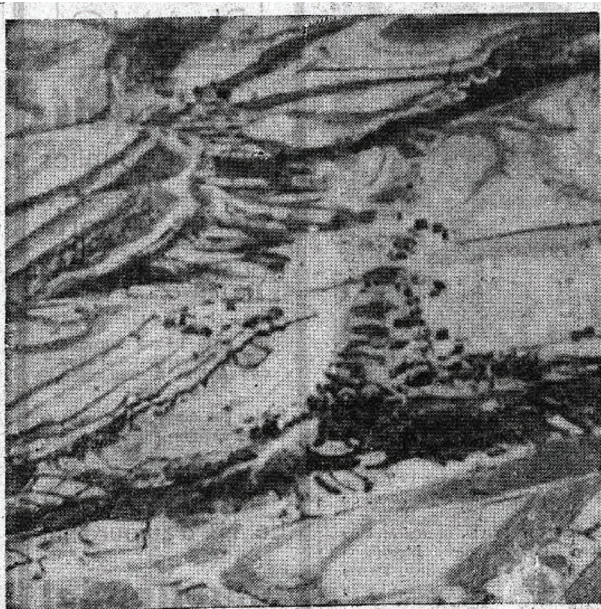
Le Prix du Recit Historique
 12.000 Francs
 Prix du Recit Historique 12.000 Francs.

Propagande allemande
 L'Intransigent.

Le mausolée de Richard III.

La mausolée de Richard III
 Le mausolée de Richard III.

Le tombeau du dernier roi d'Angleterre.



Vers la vallée des Tombeaux

du sable' [face drawn in sand] (Fig.4) was also an anamnesis-device. Or, at least, this story is something he remembered when he set up to write his *Anti-memoirs*²⁷. There he was pondering "how did I take it into my head, thirty years ago, to search for the Queen of Sheba's capital?"²⁸ Arnaud's story was one of the keys²⁹. Malraux didn't even mention the drawings after Arnaud's visit to Sheba. For him, Arnaud's relevance is in the beach scene. If, for Malraux, Arnaud's experience was eventually translated into the eternity of a sand castle swept by the sea, his own experience was to be translated in the edited photographs. As with the cartographers of the RGS, it didn't matter if the city was there. It was rather an experience of the limits of modern vision; blindness was to touch these limits from its outer side.

For Malraux, the cartographers and Le Corbusier, blindness had as strong a presence as vision. Furthermore, as opposed to preconceived narratives of the airplane endowing an all-encompassing view, in their deserts the airplane was a tool for blindness. Arnaud, Phaethon and Icarus were myths highly charged with the limits of vision. For if Malraux's take on Arnaud is literal blindness, in the Greek myths blindness was a paradoxical product of ascent, getting too close to the Sun. This Greek preoccupation with loss of sight is well described by Jacques Derrida in his catalogue for *Memoirs of the Blind*. Following Plato's allegory of the cave, Derrida traces two disguises of sight. The first one belongs to the ignorance of the prisoners of the underground chamber [cave], who can see nothing but "the shadows thrown by the fire on the wall of the cave opposite them."³⁰ But the philosopher, when rid of fetters, ascends into the sunlight; he doesn't recover sight, but rather enters into a different regime of blindness, dazzled by the glare. His role of bringing his enlightening experience back to his imprisoned fellows in the cave again is translated in blindness, unaccustomed to the dull interior. For Derrida, this process is of double-blindness, as he quotes Plato: "there are two kinds of disturbances of the eyes, stemming from two sources – when they have been transferred from light to darkness and when they have been transferred from darkness to light."³¹ This process of

anamnesis – memory and recollection – in which the ascent – been made dragged (Plato), by chariot (Phaethon), with wax-wings (Icarus) or by plane – is articulated by blindness. Derrida calls this *anamnesis* also *anabasis*³², an incursion from coastline inwards. In this (ex)cursions to the desert, the translation of their witnessing in drawings, diagrams, photographs or maps are not illuminations of sightseers but simply memories of the blind.

But not for that we are to discard them. In all his good memory of allegorical blindness that composes the essay³³, Derrida forgets to look at Saint Lucy, patroness of the blind – and also of writers. As it happens, as I am writing at this moment, today is her *onomastico*. So, hopefully an iconological analysis of Saint Lucy³⁴ will cast some light on this purblindness. Her typical depiction follows the story of a young Roman virgin martyred during the Diocletian persecution (c.303-313) – therefore the palm branch – but her distinctive symbol are the eyes carried on a golden plate – as the story goes, she was tortured by eye-gouging (Fig. 8). The peculiarity of the icon is that, despite her eyes having been removed, her saintly face stills conserves them. These either face the devote beholder of the image, or more literally they are lifted up to God (Fig. 9). This four-eyed characterisation points out to a double form of vision. On the one hand the natural sight that she lost. On the other – or rather on her face – the Christian belief in the direct contemplation of God after a saintly death – in other words, ‘beatific vision’. These two pairs, as opposed to Plato’s ‘two disturbances of the eyes’, affirm a duality of vision – one in which blindness of natural sight implies an opening up of the eyes of faith. In fact, as Derrida ascertains, for Plato the only hope for not ruining his eyes by the gleaming lights of the “things that are”, he is to recur to the *logoi* – their reflections – like the persons that look at the “image [of the sun] in water or something of the sort.”³⁵ In the case of St. Lucy there’s unmediated direct vision, face to face. However, she still carries a metal plate or cup. At this point, both traditions come together. While for Plato the mirroring surface is what reverses the image, being capable of looking indirectly at the sun; in the case of

(previous page)
Fig. 6- Malraux, André. *Images of Sheba* published in *L'Intransigeant*. May, 8th 1934. © BnF

Fig. 7- Malraux, André. *Images of Sheba* published in *L'Intransigeant*. May, 10th 1934. © BnF

(facing page)
 Fig. 8- Nucci,
 Avanzino. *Sainte*
Lucie tenant
un livre sous le
bras et ses yeux
sur une coupe.
 INV 4502,
 Recto. Fonds
 des dessins
 et miniatures.
 c. 1671. ©
 Musée du
 Louvre
 Fig. 9- Crivelli,
 Carlo. *Saint*
Lucy, belonging
 to the group
Four Panels from
an altarpiece,
Ascoli Piceno. c.
 1430/5-about
 1494.
 NG788.12 ©
 The National
 Gallery

Lucy's tray it becomes an instrument of securing the eyes always fixed upwards. Both elements operate a dislocation of the natural horizon in the uplifting movement. While most obviously the upside-down vision of the cameras they were carrying would be the iconological instrument of these 'desert martyrs', the airplane also played a key role in this shifting of horizons (Fig. 10). As Malraux wrote when looking at his Farman 190 just before departure:

"(...) this engine, this machine, is Occident itself, gazing at the clouds and the sky with the soul of Chaldean astrologers. (...) The cities, after a millennium, have eclipsed everything that only the sailors still know (...) Once again, we are going to rediscover the sky and the earth of those that ruled empires like the one we are moving towards: the geomancer, the magus, the reader of stars...that watched the firmament as if it was a desert, full of beasts [*fauves*], enemies or accomplices. They were looking, as we are doing now, for their weaknesses [*faiblesses*] or their favours [*favours*] just before departing from their terraces lit by resin torches, to get lost in their constellated night."³⁶

While very early in its history the dashboard of the airplanes integrated an artificial horizon to prevent it, Malraux was very much in favour of confusing heaven and earth, cloud and desert.

Furthermore, his mentioning of geomancers clarifies the role of their search for a desert city in the middle of blindness. As Joseph Rykwert explains in his *The Idea of a Town*, the role of a geomancer was "an integral part" in the foundation of Roman cities³⁷. Specifically, the role of the *augur* was to watch for the signs in the sky, from which the ritual followed with the act of *conregio*. "For the *conregio*, the augur drew a diagram on the ground with his curved wand, his *lituus*. (...) 'He prayed to the gods (...) and fixed the regions from east to west, saying that the southern parts were to the right, and the northern to the left.' This fixing of the regions, and the naming of landmarks, such as trees, which bounded them, while he pointed to them with his staff, constituted the *conregio*."³⁸ While no prayer, wand or staff were involved in my cases, there's a certain parallel with the search



of orientation for moving in the desert of the cartographers of the RGS, as well as in Le Corbusier's meridian. But what is present in all of them, including Malraux, is the 'drawing of a diagram'. In the case of the augur, this diagram was traced over the earth, fruit of consulting the signs in the sky. In the case of my winged travellers, this downwards movement from the air to the earth was a literal projection into the desert from the sky. Whether the city was there – the oasis of M'Zab – or not – Zerzura and the capital of the queen of Sheba – the diagram was to be produced. But in both the augur and my cases, as Rykwert continues, the diagram represented tracing the boundaries of a city. In a context in which, as Malraux puts it, "the cities (...) have eclipsed everything", while the journeys to the desert were an escape from the modern metropolis, this didn't mean being in an undefined limitless desert/exterior. This exterior was delimited, defined, tracing a boundary around it. It was not the desert, but the city in the desert that they were looking for. In fact, this desert city was constructed as a mirror of the one they were escaping: a city other-to-the-modern-city. Zerzura was the city outside cartographic conventions. The pentapole oasis of the M'Zab a negative of the 19th century metropolis. The desert was not an exterior, but the mechanism that enabled this city to be projected, the ground over which to draw a diagram.

In this sense, it's not strange to see how Nietzsche aligned the flight with the redefinition of borders – "he who will one day teach men to fly will have moved all the boundary-stones; all the boundary-stones will themselves fly into the air with him, he will baptise the earth anew."³⁹ Moreover, how this redefinition of boundaries is instrumental for the need, as he notices in *On the uses and disadvantages of history for life*, to "enclose[e] oneself within a bounded horizon."⁴⁰ The formless sandy vacuum needed to be demarcated. However, how this bounded horizon was to be defined could be considered paradoxical to their sightless condition. For this, Derrida interestingly recalls the spatial condition of the blind epitomised in *the blind man's buff*⁴¹. In the game, the blindfolded person needs to touch the other participants who move around sighted. Though vision is negated, the main character

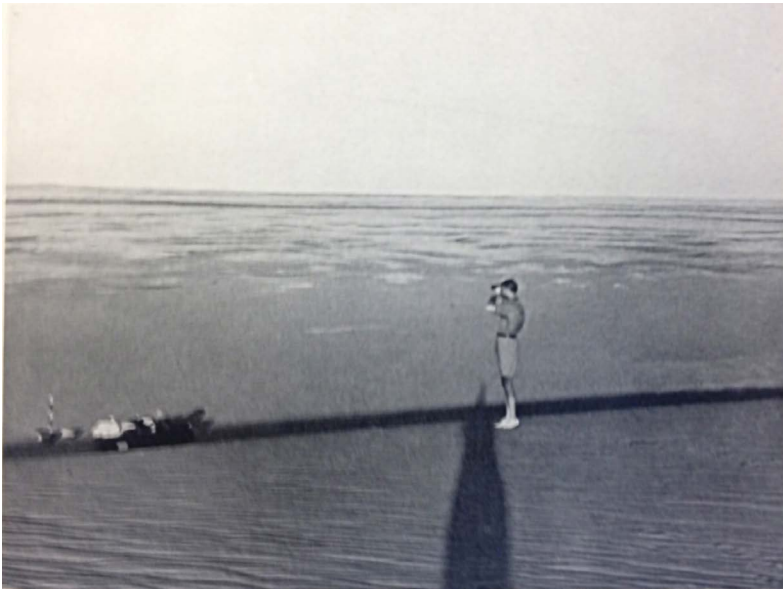


Fig. 10a- Von der Esch, Hansjoachim. *László Almásy with camera; shadow of his airplane on the sand* in Almásy, László. *Unbekannte Sahara*. 1939.

Fig. 10b- Penderel in the shadow of the “molly” in Almásy, László. *Levegőben...Homokon*. 1937.

constructs a horizon around himself which coincides with the breadth of his extended arms. Though, as I mentioned, Derrida didn't regard Saint Lucy's eyes, blind man's buff is a literal displacement of the eyes into the hands, a sight that "relay[s] by *touching*."⁴² While this tactile construction of the horizon matches Arnaud lying in the wet sand, I believe the airplane constituted more of a prosthetic form of constructing the horizon. Perhaps it is because my spatial experience of the game is more of a Goyaesque/Spanish version (Fig. 11), than Derrida's French one. Of course, the prosthetic eye becoming a large spoon is a different kind of experience, at least a stretched one. However, what constitutes a spatial experience of a different sort with regards to the French version is the fact that the blindfolded one is at the centre, the rest of players hand in hand around him forming a closed circle. It is this spatial experience that brings together the limitless expansion of blindness, the limited breadth of a prosthetic eye and the knowledge of being at the centre of an interior. While seemingly far away from the desert winged travellers, I would argue that the only relevant difference is in that the bluffed blind has his feet on the ground. The blind winged traveller space is characterised by limitless expansion – the desert – the prosthetic eye – the plane – and the constructed interior – their cities other to the modern metropolis. Both are paradoxically interiors.

While Le Corbusier wanted to be a desert-architect, Arnaud was probably a more gifted one, with his drawings, his Daedalus-like plans and his models made of sand. His drawings making their way to the Salle Labrouste could be seen as not in keeping with the experience of the desert. I would rather say they just closed the circle. Surrounded by toe-to-ceiling rows of books, only seeing the exterior through the oculi of the domes, my eyes were part of their desert. Deserts that were never out-there. But they rather formed a confined series of interiors. What entered the discussions back in Paris was never whatever was out there but only the traces of their eyeless experience. My eyes were simply at the centre, facing their blind sights.

Endnotes

1. Malraux ponders the idea of being following the “ombre [shadow]” of Arnaud, rather than the one of the queen in the second article of his series. cf. Malraux, André. *A la découverte de la capitale mystérieuse de la reine de Saba. II. – Fantômes de sable* in *L'Intransigeant*. May 4th, 1934.
2. cf. Glaser, Eduard. *Die Route Th. J. Arnauds nach Mârib (12-25 Juli 1843)* in *Eduard Glasers Reise Nach Mârib*. 1913. Wien, Austria. Alfred Höller. pp. 161-165.
3. cf. Ibid. p. 162.
4. Arnaud, Joseph. *Pièces relatives aux inscriptions himyrites découvertes à San'â, à Khariba, à Mareh, etc.* in *Journal Asiatique*. Sept-Oct 1845. pp. 169- 237.
5. After finding them again, Jules Mohl published them in the *Journal Asiatique* in January, 1874. cf. Mohl, Jules. *Plan de la Digue et de la Ville de Mareh, par M. Th. Jos. Arnaud, Note Préliminaire* in *Journal Asiatique*. 1874, Vol. 1. p. 1-3.
6. Jules Mohl in his letter that accompanied the drawings to the Bibliothèque Nationale stated his intentions of publishing them in a future *Cabier du Journal Asiatique*; despite



Fig. 11- Goya, Francisco de. *The Blind Man's Buff* [*La Gallina Ciega*]. 1788.© Museo del Prado

of it, he did not publish the original drawing, which were produced by Fresnel. cf. Arnaud, Thomas-Joseph Arnaud & Vayssi re, Alexandrie. *Voyage au Pays de la Reine de Saba; suave de en  gypte. Pr face d'Alexandre Dumas. Pr sent  par Claude Schopp*. 2011. Paris, Pygmalion. As well as Arnaud, Thomas-Joseph (1812-1884). *Plan de la digue de Mareb et des ruines de la ville de Saba, dans le midi de l'Arabie / Fait par Mr. Th. Joseph Arnaud en 1843*. 1873. Biblioth que nationale de France, d partement Cartes et plans, GE D-14364.

7. Jules Mohl also remarked the precision of the drawings despite having been produced by someone who is not a geometrician. cf. Mohl, Jules. 1874. p. 3.

8. cf. Delpuech, Philippe. * Una <<aventura geogr fica>>? in Malraux, Andr . La Reina de Saba. Una aventura geogr fica*. 2011. Barcelona, Ediciones Pen nsula. pp. 32-33. Flaubert wrote a very vivid representation of the queen of Sheba in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (1874).

9. cf. Mt. 12: 42, ESV

10. cf. Arnaud, Joseph. *Relation d'un voyage   Mareb (Saba) entrepris en 1843* in *Journal Asiatique*, 1845, Tome V, pp. 208-25 & 309-345; 1845, Tome VI, pp.169-237.

11. cf. Echeverr a, Ignacio. *El Sue o de la Historia* in Malraux, Andr . 2011. p.14-15.

12. Alexandre Dumas, who met Arnaud in Arabia, mentions the hermaphrodite donkey. cf. Arnaud, Thomas-Joseph. 2011. p. 237.

13. To see more about Arnaud's donkey cf. Malraux, Andr . op. cit. May, 4th 1934.

14. cf. Echeverr a, Ignacio. 2011. p.16.

15. cf. Ibid. p. 15

16. cf. Corniglion-Molinier,  douard. *La Naissance d'un raid* in *L'Intransigeant*. May 5th, 1934.

17. cf. Ibid.

18. cf. Delpuech, Philippe. 2011. p. 39.

19. Corniglion-Molinier,  douard. May 5th, 1934.

20. Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. *Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista*. May 11th, 1912.

21. cf. Malraux, Andr . *  la d couverte de la capitale myst rieuse de la reine de Saba. I. – Porte de l'Inconnu* in *L'Intransigeant*. May 3th, 1934.

22. *L'Intransigeant*, March 8th, 1934.

23. cf. Echevarria, Ignacio. 2011. p.17. Translation by the author.

24. Malraux, Andr . *  la d couverte de la capitale myst rieuse de la reine de Saba. II. – Fant mes de sable* in *L'Intransigeant*. May, 4th 1934.

25. While Arnaud did get blind at some point after visiting Ma'rib, it is difficult to ascertain at what point, before or after the drawing, get the ophthalmia let him blind. The drawings are authored by Arnaud himself in their archival entry at the Bibliothèque Nationale. However, when Mohl published them, he affirmed that Fresnel produced them, out of what Arnaud constructed "avec du sable humide [out of wet sand]" (in Mohl, Jules. 1874. p. 2) Obviously, no allusion to the desert scene is found in any other source than Malraux.
26. Foucault, Michel. *Les Mots et les choses*. 1966. Paris, Éditions Gallimard. p. 398.
27. cf. Malraux, André. *Antimemoirs*, Translated by Terence Kilmartin. 1968. London. Hamish Hamilton. p. 57-58.
28. Ibid. p. 54.
29. The other key, as Malraux explains, was his love for the legend of Lawrence of Arabia. cf. Ibid. p. 272.
30. cf. Plato. *The Republic*. 1955. London, Penguin Books. 515.
31. Ibid., 517b-518a. As quoted in Derrida, Jacques. *Memoirs of the Blind*. 1993. London, The University of Chicago Press. p.15
32. cf. Derrida, Jacques. 1993. p. 15.
33. The whole text that accompanied the exhibition is articulated by iconological figures and allegories of the blind: the cured blind outside Jericho, Tiresias, Truth and Error, Homer, Isaac, Tobit, Cain and Abel, Perseus and Medusa, Polyphemus, Samson, Belisarius, Saint Paul...Saint Lucy, or Saint Lucille is only mentioned in passing, relegated to the footnote number 1. cf. Derrida, Jacques. 1993. p. 5.
34. The name comes from the Latin *lux*, light.
35. Plato. *Phaedo*, trans. Harold North Fowler. 1982. London, Loeb Classical Library. 99d-e. As quoted in Derrida, Jacques. 1993. p. 15, footnote 1.
36. Malraux, André. *A la découverte de la capitale mystérieuse de la reine de Saba. I. – Porte de l'Inconnu* in *L'Intransigeant*. Thursday, May 3rd, 1934. p. 1
37. cf. Rykwert, Joseph. *The Idea of a Town*. 1976. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press. p. 44.
38. Ibid.
39. Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the Spirit of Gravity" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. p. 304.
40. Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life" in *Untimely Meditations*. 1997. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p.120.
41. cf. Derrida, Jacques. 1993. p. 94-97.
42. Ibid. p.94.

Cluster 3
(the limits of)
KNOWLEDGE

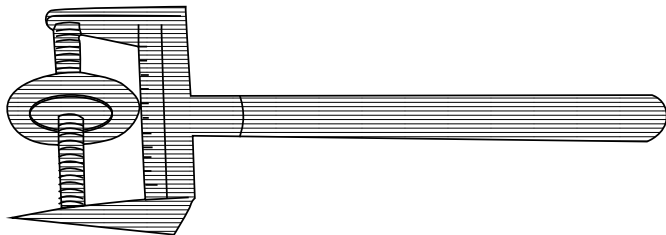


It is an old truism that the desert is a locus of knowledge. The desert brings a promise of putting oneself outside, mind undisrupted by the troubles of the metropolis. Thoughts are seemingly sharpened by the open space, words become clear-cut by emptiness. The landscape works as a metaphor of a state of mind: lucid, clear, empty. It is a cliché that moves from Biblical narratives, to Orientalist travellers and all the way to Koolhaas. What this cluster proposes is the other desert; a desert of ignorance, disruptions and visual tricks. It is the desert that remained beyond the limits of Western knowledge, a desert of the mirages.

The cluster proposes two movements for reframing the desert outside the categories of knowledge. The first movement is away from Orientalism into ethnography. For that, Stop 4 looks at the imaginary generated by the work of Raymond Roussel. Roussel's books are highly charged with Orientalist ideas. However, as opposed to an Orientalism that postulates knowledge of the Orient, Roussel's is a more complex one. His work is based on misunderstanding. Stop 4 will look at how Roussel's imaginary of Africa is based on a sequence of presentation of his text, misinterpretation from his readers, explanation from Roussel that intends rectifying the misunderstanding, followed by further confusion. That mechanism praises the qualities of an element that escapes comprehension, beyond knowledge, always leaving room for misunderstanding. This quality is condensed in his notion of impressions – a knowledge generated as unconscious feeling. In the case of Roussel, these impressions are not at all generated by travelling, but rather by distance. Impressions of Africa are his impressions, in other words, his projection of certain clichés over the continent. A set of prejudices that ethnography promises to remove by the fact of going there. This movement away from Orientalism into ethnography will be portrayed in Michel Leiris, ethnographer that travels to Africa in order to dismantle the racist impressions of Roussel. Going there effectively operated a change in the regime of knowledge. However, for Leiris, the detached standpoint of the ethnographer as observer was not enough. A further movement away from Orientalism took Leiris's ethnography into immersing himself in the society he was researching. His movement is from impressions into intimations, condensed in his Journal Intime – the series of notebooks in which he wrote the diary of his ethnographic mission.

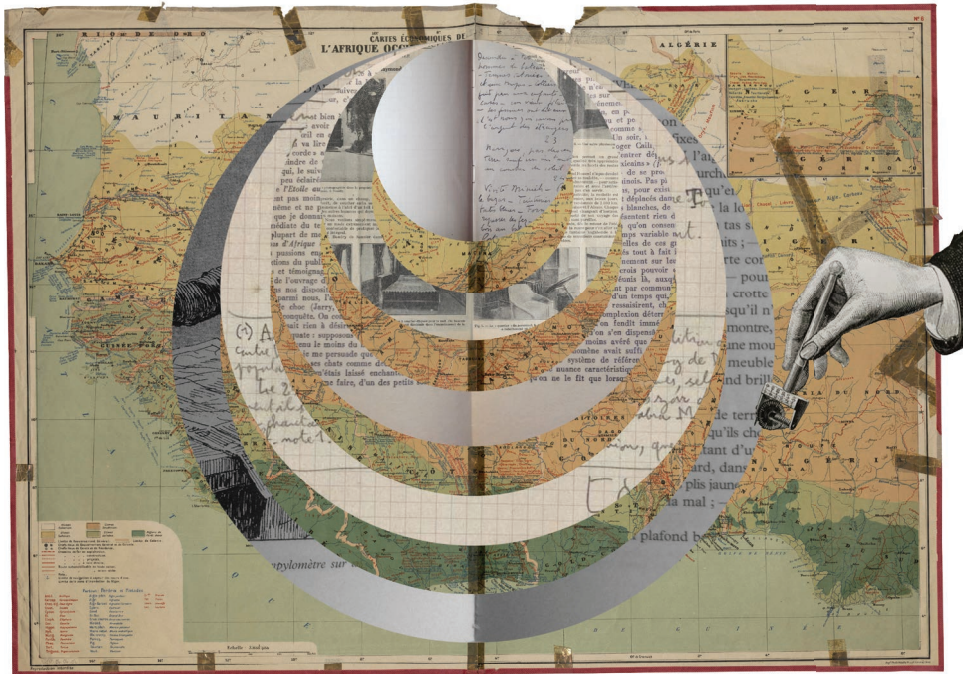
The second movement in the cluster is away from ethnography into ethnofiction. Stop 5 will research on the tension already apparent in Leiris: between the ethnographer as observer and the ethnographer as subject immersed in the action. This tension is explored by looking at the ethnographic practice of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan. While van Eyck was a firm advocate of a detached point of view, Herman Haan presents a quest for immersing oneself in the other, influenced by the works of ethnofiction. What Stop 5 argues is that this process of immersion was in fact a process of internalisation in which dealing with exteriors was tightly connected with the possibility of generating an interior. A connection that highlights how the relationship between desert and metropolis was not of opposition. Rather, it affirms the possibility of understanding their relation as a continuum.

The Exkursus finally investigates how this continuity can be read in the explorer's obsession with finding a city in the desert. For that, it will deal with the Fata Morgana, a superior form of mirage in which distant cities are projected upside down in the desert. The journey to the desert is not in an exterior, but rather in mirror images of the metropolis back home.



Stop 4 *Le Domain de l'Afrique*

Libyan desert somewhere between
Benghazi and Cairo, at about 2.45am,
30 December 1935.



At about four o'clock on that 25th June, everything appeared to be ready for the coronation of Tālu VII, Emperor of Ponukele and King of Drelshkaf. Although the sun was low in the sky, the heat was still overpowering in that part of Africa, near the equator, and the thundery atmosphere, untempered by the slightest breeze, weighed oppressively on every one of us. Before me lay the vast expanse of Trophies Square (...) The perfect square formed by the esplanade was outlined on each side, by a row of sycamores planted some hundred years earlier. (...) On my right, in front of the trees, at a point in the middle of the row, stood a kind of red theatre, like a gigantic Punch-and-Judy show, whose façade bore the words *The Incomparables Club* arranged in three lines of silver lettering in a glittering surround of broad golden rays, spreading in every direction like those around a sun. (Roussel, Raymond. *Impressions of Africa*. 2001. p. 1.)

When André Malraux recalled his journey in search of Sheba in *Anti-memoirs*, he added that “The legend of Lawrence (...) is the dazzling legend of a Queen of Sheba’s army, with its Arab partisans deployed beneath flying banners among the jerboas of the desert.”¹ It was a note pointing to his passion for the figure of the British adventurer. A fascination for Lawrence of Arabia that he epitomised in the unfinished and unpublished 500-page essay *Le Démon de l’absolu*². What he did publish, though, was *Lawrence and the Demon of the Absolute*, an essay in *The Hudson Review* in 1954, clarifying since the opening paragraph that what he was doing was not a literary review of Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*³. A shame for us, because Lawrence’s 1926 book is just a perfect representative of how the desert has been associated

357



Fig. 1a- *Fotografía del personal de la Escuadrilla del Sáhara Español(...) de pie, el primero por la izquierda, Saint Exupéry.* [Photograph of the staff of the Spanish Sahara Squadron(...) standing, the first from the left, Saint Exupéry. Ref. 3-1077-20 ©Archivo Histórico del Ejército del Aire.

Fig. 1b- *Vista aérea del Fuerte de Cabo Juby* [Aerial view of Cabo Juby fort]. Ref. DIG-51-33. ©Archivo Histórico del Ejército del Aire.

with a locus of knowledge. Being that knowledge in the tradition of Biblical illuminations, or being it a fascination with non-Western forms of knowledge, the journey to the desert is ultimately a quest for lucidity. Lawrence clearly stated it in his aforementioned aphorism “words in the desert are clear-cut.”⁴ What this cluster will look at is how, throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, this ‘knowledge’ was generated by the tension between a landscape of legibility for the undisrupted mind and the *mind-blowingness* of mirages.

To begin with, let’s look at how the paradigmatic view from the airplane started crashing in the ‘30s. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s *Terre des Hommes* [Wind, Sand and Stars] (Fig. 2), a successor of Lawrence’s and a winged version of the pillars of Wisdom, brings together the two poles of lucidity and puzzlement. The book is first and foremost a Humanist meditation; an aerial desert sojourn in which the pilot ponders about the human condition – though paradoxically full of thoughts uttered where no man is to be found, in the middle of the Sahara. Saint-Exupéry is famous for his *Little Prince* but also as heroic pilot of the French Compagnie générale aéropostale for whom he worked for years as operator of the line Toulouse-Dakar⁵. His reflections in *Terre des Hommes* are fruit of that time spent in the utter isolated posts like Cabo Juby (Fig. 1) but furthermore by his aerial experience over the North African desert. Hand in hand, the desert and the airplane are tight together for Saint-Exupéry: “I succumbed to the desert as soon as I saw it, and I saw it almost as soon as I had wings.”⁶ In line with the pilots we have seen, he coupled sand and wings, but moreover they formed a trident with the experience of being outside the city. This last pole – being outside the city – was a relevant one. In this third pole, overflying the desert symbolised the destruction of a Potemkin-village-like experience of Man in the metropolis.

“The airplane has unveiled for us the true face of the earth. For centuries, highways had been deceiving us. We were like that queen who determined to move among her subjects so

By the author of
NIGHT FLIGHT

Decorations by
John O'H. Cosgrave, II



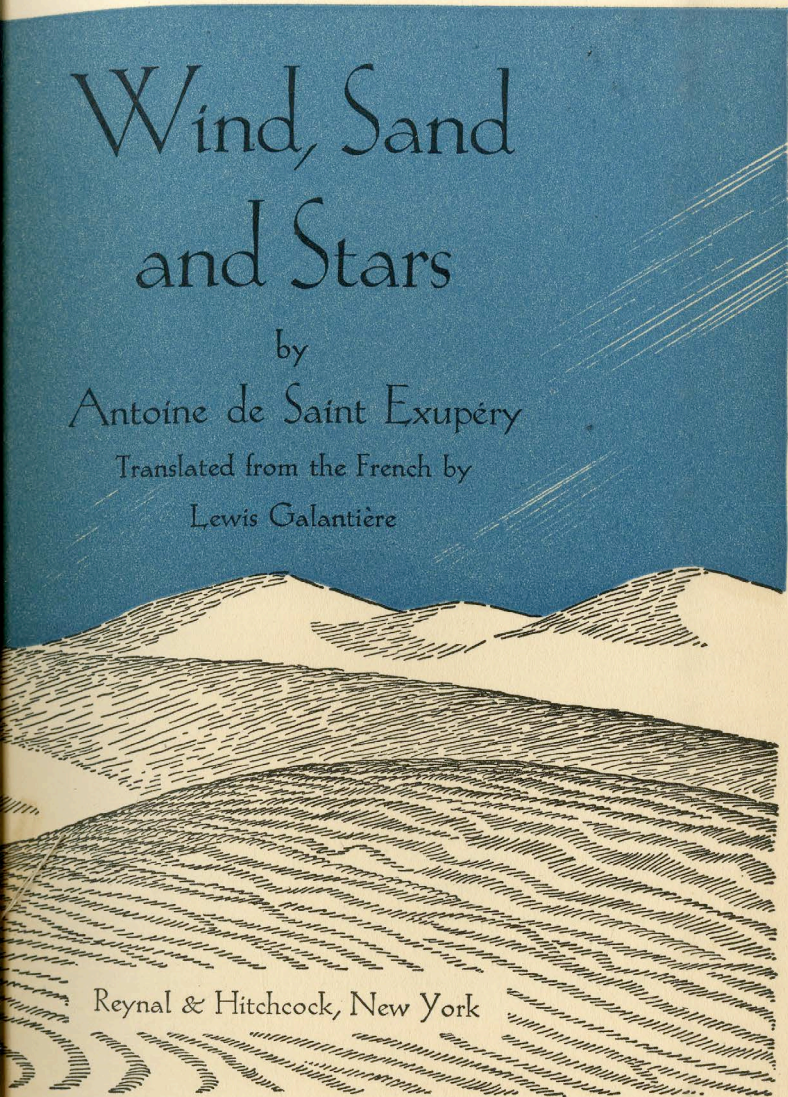
Wind, Sand and Stars

by

Antoine de Saint Exupéry

Translated from the French by

Lewis Galantière



Reynal & Hitchcock, New York



Fig. 3- Interior of Saint-Exupéry's Airplane-Caudron C.630 Simoun, F-ANRY.

that she might learn for herself whether or not they rejoice in her reign. Her courtiers took advantage of her innocence to garland the road she traveled and set dancers in her path. Led forward on their halter, she saw nothing of her kingdom and could not know that over the countryside the famished were cursing her.

(...) And even when a road hazards its way over the desert, you will see it make thousand détours to make its pleasure at the oasis (...) We have elected to believe that our planet was merciful and fruitful.”⁷⁷

(previous page)

Fig. 2- *Frontispiece for Wind, Sand and Stars*. John O'Hara Cosgrave. 1939.

Taking the pilot off the disguising tracks, the airplane revealed ‘the true face of the earth’, a face that is epitomised in the desert, a landscape that lays bare the fact that the “planet was” not “merciful and fruitful.” This unveiling – a removal of the cover⁸ – was prompted by the airplane and evidenced in the desert. They constitute the main scenario of the text – an interesting one for a book that is almost 300 pages long. The long hours of flight over the desert, further than boredom, gave Saint-Exupéry a lot to think and write about. These meditations from the cockpit over the sand unfold thematics of friendship, death, the value of life, etc.; issues that, in Saint-Exupéry’s understanding, remained concealed for the modern man behind the fake façades of life in the city. Removed the trick, the sand and the wings enabled seeing with undisturbed reason. But, while the desert is the fruit of tearing down the decorated billboard, it doesn’t necessarily imply the discovery of an evident countenance behind it. Yes, Saint-Exupéry claimed finding a face, but not of well-defined traits. “The love of the Sahara, like love itself, is born of a face perceived and never really seen.”⁹ To the humanistic tropes of the desert as epistemic journey¹⁰ – his meditations on the human condition as pondered from the cockpit – there’s a counterbalanced experience of mirages; the suspicion that behind the Potemkin layer, there’s a mask of another sort.

This is the case of ‘Prisoner of Sand’, penultimate chapter of the book, in which the ‘wisdom-of-the-sands’¹¹ narrative shifts into the experience of being out-of-control in the desert¹². This is clearly marked by a change of epistemological standpoint: from aerial

horizon into wandering entrapment; it is the narrative of his desert crash. On the 30 December 1935, roughly at 2.30am, Saint-Exupéry and his mechanic Prévot found themselves shipwrecked somewhere on the line between Benghazi – that they had left some hours before – and Cairo. That same year he had bought his *Simoon* (Fig. 3), the fastest aircraft of the moment, and they were attempting a record for the raid *Paris-Saigon*¹³. It didn't last very long. After a rough flight among low clouds, Saint-Exupéry confused a supposedly distant light towards which he directed the flight, not knowing that the sand was too close. They crashed at a hundred and seventy miles per hour. They miraculously survived¹⁴. However, the worst was still to come: they were at an uncertain location, they didn't carry a wireless and, obviously, they lost all the water in the crash, "the sand had drunk everything."¹⁵ It was then the beginning of four days of stranding in the desert dying of thirst. In that wandering spatial condition, mirages started to emerge. On the first day, the mirages were "of a common kind – sheets of water that materialized and then vanished as we neared them."¹⁶ However, shortly after they became disturbing, "fortresses and minarets, angular geometric hulks."¹⁷ Certainly their only means of hydrating didn't help lucidness, collecting the morning dew in their parachutes – a vomiting mixture of water, rust and oil. The sense of reality started being diluted with desert visual tricks. And all their effort consisted in keeping their minds cold while heading north-eastwards in search of salvation. This difference between the dry reality of sand and their humid illusions opens in the narrative a split monologue between the rational Saint-Exupéry and the deceived one. Desperation becomes eventually a form of immersion, of letting himself be tricked.

"Over the hilltop. Look there, at the horizon! The most beautiful city in the world!

'You know perfectly well that is a mirage.'

Of course I know it is a mirage! Am I the sort of man who can be fooled? But what if I *want* to go after that mirage?

Suppose I enjoy indulging my hope? Suppose it suits me to love that crenelated town all beflagged with sunlight? What

if I choose to walk straight ahead on light feet – for you must know that I have dropped my weariness behind me, I am happy now (...) I prefer my drunkness. I am drunk. I am dying of thirst.”¹⁸

Of course, he didn't find the town. He didn't find death in that occasion either. What he did find, though, was the appreciation that the knowledge in the mirages, as we shall see, consists not in perpetuating their tension through reason, but rather in letting oneself be tricked. If in a first moment the mirage brings a doubling of the self – reason pulling against deception – the synthesis of this double entails letting the latter pull through to the limits in which reason is apparently lost¹⁹. A paradoxical “drunkness of thirst” emerges. While this is certainly a precarious definition, it is so because for Saint-Exupéry the mirage is still the anecdotal counterbalance to reason, the exception that strengthens his narrative of the aerial desert as revelatory experience. In other words, the mirage is only one chapter in his autobiography; a page easy to be turned (Fig. 5). However, the scene of his desert crash introduces us to a different form of wisdom.

What this chapter is going to look at is this other knowledge in the desert. Neither the one of the open horizon and clear sight of the airplane, nor the wisdom of the wanderer of the sands. Stop 4 will delve in the knowledge that was to be searched beyond Western knowledge. Orientalism – that is, the system of knowledge and institutions that deal with the so-called Orient – as Edward Said has claimed, seems the paradigmatic form in which the West has intended to understand the Orient. This Stop will not remain in Orientalism but rather in two forms in which the non-Western knowledge of North-Africa was approached in the 1930s and 1940s. We will term these two forms *impressions* and *intimations*. The main character that threads both forms is Raymond Roussel, a French writer with a complex relation to the continent, however his work left an enduring impression in Michel Leiris's imaginary of Africa. If Said considered the whole of Orientalism as inter-textual topos; in this stop Roussel's text appears 365





[illegible]

Fig. 5- *L'avion de Jacques Bernis, écrasé dans le désert*. [Jacques Bernis' airplane crashes into the desert] in Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *Dessins. Aquarelles, pastels, plumes et crayons*. 2006. Paris. Gallimard. p. 204.

as inter-text – both in that it brings the characters together, but also in that, appearing at the entry of each section, it gives a frame in which to read that section. In this first one, the opening lines of Roussel's book provides us with a stage, the vast expanse of the Trophies Square, a desert in miniature. A setting for the chapter to unfold, as Aldo Rossi used the very same stage as set in his *A Scientific Autobiography* (1981)²⁰. Along this stop, these impressions appear as settings over which the action happens. Each of these sections focuses on one particular work giving response to an impression by Roussel. That way, the stop will find its way through impressions and responses, misinterpretations and attempts of clarification. In that feedback process, I would argue, a peculiar 'knowledge' of Africa is generated.

On reading Roussel's impression, we enter a region in which mirages can be mistaken by realities. Looking at the desert as a device subtly changes the focus of the landscape. It is possible to read *Impressions of Africa* in reverse. It was the impressions of Roussel over the landscape, not of the landscape upon Roussel.

The way we are going to look at Roussel's influence is through a series of misunderstandings. To each of these misinterpretations, Roussel attempts a correction by giving explanation of his intentions. However, each of these explanations eventually gives room to further misunderstandings. This way, Roussel's influence unfolds a logic different to the way Orientalism was constructed, gaining its validity by statements based on previous accounts. However, precisely in that building up knowledge through received ideas, Orientalism and Roussel's influence are not that far from each other. Orientalism, in Edward Said's terms, developed "a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imaging, or an amalgam of all these."²¹ Paradoxically, if Orientalism was constructed by accumulated experiences that are validated by referencing each other, the imaginary around Roussel's *Afrique* was built up by accumulated misunderstandings.

(previous page)
Fig. 4- *Antoine de Saint Exupéry stands next to the wreck of his Caudron C.630 Simoun, F-ANRY.* ©Bureau d'Archives des Accidents d'Avions.

[*Impressions d'Afrique, Raymond Roussel, 1910*]

(...) I came and sat down underneath the branches of the sycamore, offering my aid to facilitate Caramichael's task. He immediately handed me a large, loose sheet of paper, on which the barbaric pronunciation of the Ponukelian text had been carefully transcribed into French (...)

The crowd, forsaking Trophies Square, had slowly dispersed through Ejur, and, in the great silence of the early morning, only slightly absorbed by my purely mechanical task, I could not help musing over the many adventures which had filled my life during the past three months.

(Roussel, Raymond. *Impressions of Africa*. 2001. p. 150-151)

The first thing in order to understand Roussel's influence is that he claimed he had never been understood. While this is not exceptional when looking at baffling influences of Surrealism, in the case of Roussel it was a vital problematic as he considered himself born for literary glory. He was an accommodated bourgeois born and bred, developing a Proustian childhood of 'perfect happiness'²². But this conception of the self-glory clashing with the opinion of the others didn't take much time to emerge. It was troublesome since the publication of his first work when he was twenty, *La Doublure* (1897), which "c[a]me up against an almost universal wall of hostile incomprehension"²³, as he put it to Dr. Pierre Janet – pioneer French psychologist treating him for the depression caused by the failure. In fact, this was a constant throughout his life until he took it in Sicily, escaping Paris driven by the disgust produced by the misinterpretation of his works²⁴.

The second thing is to understand that this misunderstanding of his oeuvre is very understandable. His works are rather obscure, touching non-sense, leaving the reader little space to find a graspable logic. This was the case with the general audience of his time, as well

as fervent admirers such as Michel Leiris, André Breton, or Marcel Duchamp. While here obviously I will not claim an exegesis of *Impressions of Africa*, it is necessary to attempt a description of the book. The novel opens with the crowd of the *Lynceus* that, having set sail from Marseille has shipwrecked in Ejur, the invented capital of Drelshkaf. They are hostages of Talu VII the local Emperor. In this context, the reader is presented with a narrator that describes the main square of the town. He is witness to the events that are to unfold but, after introducing the scene, he disappears until the second half of the narrative. The first half, though, relates the ceremony of coronation of the chief. Each of the hostages enters the scene, delivers a discombobulating cameo and leaves the square – that works as a gala stage. The amusing sketches draw the reader into a strange sequence in which each performance is more puzzling than the previous. Vaudeville dances, electric phantasmagorias and bizarre machines over a backdrop mixing the desert and Rousseauian jungle. They form a strange combination of popular sketches, premiere of scientific inventions and National Geographic documentary in which the African tribe is actually the spectator, the European the performers. What the reader is continuously missing is the logic behind the sequence. This never becomes apparent until the second part – chapter X on – in which the narrator comes back again to explain how they reached that situation, introduces the characters and gives the logic of the sketches. Having gone through a hundred and fifty pages of unintelligible skits, this late explanation, though, was a problem when it was first published as a series of episodes in the newspaper *Le Gaulois du Dimanche*, beginning on the 10-11 July 1909²⁵. After four months of stories, the series stops before coming to a close. This lesson was a learnt one when, a year after, Roussel decided to publish the story in the form of novel by his own expenses. In this first edition by Lemerre the top of page one is headed by the notice: “Readers who are uninitiated into the art of Raymond Roussel would do well to read this book first from page 212 to page 455, then from page 1 to page 211.”²⁶ It was an attempt of reversing the



Fig 6- Poster for *Impressions d'Afrique* at the *Théâtre Antoine*. 1912.
Ref. R85558. ©BnF.

problems of telling a puzzling story followed by its explanation. While the disclaimer intended a bit of understanding towards the writer, the critiques were not that condescending. “Nobody paid any attention” were Roussel’s memories in 1932. However, the actual public opinion was not the way Roussel recalled it. At least, not completely like that, when seeing that his third attempt was to adapt it into theatre and for the programme of the play he attached a list of “Opinions of the press concerning the book *Impressions d’Afrique* from which the author ha[d] adapted this play”²⁷, in which the appraisal of the work was formulated by various critics.

In this last iteration, the work was received again with hostility by the general public²⁸. However, amidst the critiques, Roussel gained some adepts: Guillaume Apollinaire, Marcel Duchamp and André Breton enthusiastically attended the play. Nevertheless, among the Surrealists there was still disparity. While for Duchamp “[i]t was magnificent. On the stage there was a dummy and a snake that moved (or both moved?) a little bit. It was the absolute madness of the unusual”²⁹; André Breton was more cautious in his judgement.

“His book, *Impressions d’Afrique*, seems to me to participate in the most recent poetic ideas and to hold an important place in the world of the imagination. I do not think that this novel is a masterpiece (its form is rather vulgar), but its thinking is really strange and the fancy takes on an extremely rare constructive or architectural appearance.”³⁰

Roussel, though, regarded the judgement of his Surrealist young adepts as banalities³¹.

Moving from misunderstanding to misunderstanding, and from one format to another, the title of the text started playing a double meaning. The first serial version departed from fragments of his story *Parmi les Noires* [Among the Blacks], which he sent for *impression*, i.e. *publication*. The meaning of the title was then both the ‘impressions[judgements] of a White among the Blacks’, and the impressions[imprint] of black over white paper³². Therefore, the title was as much an ‘imprint’ as a ‘sentiment’ or a ‘judgement’. However,

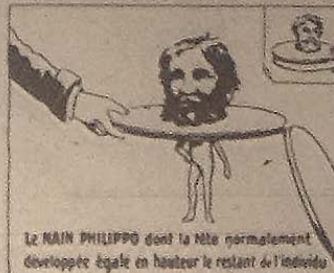
(following page)
Fig. 7- *Main Scenes*
in *Impressions*
d’Afrique at
the Théâtre
Antoine. 1912.
Ref. R85558.
©BnF

THEATRE ANTOINE

IMPRESSION

SCÈNES F

LE VER DE TERRE
JOUEUR DE CITHARE



Le NAIN PHILIPPO dont la tête normalement développée égale en hauteur le restant de l'individu

LA STATUE
en balais de
corset roulant
sur des rails
en peau de vache



L'ORCHESTRE THERMO-MÉCANIQUE
à BEXIUM



LE MUN DE DOMINOS ÉVOCATEUR DE PRÊTRES

Le CHOUTCHOU CARUC contre lequel
repose à plat le cadavre du roi nègre
YAGOUR IX classiquement costumé en
Marguerite de FAUST.



DIRECTION INTERIMAIRE

NS D'AFRIQUE

PRINCIPALES

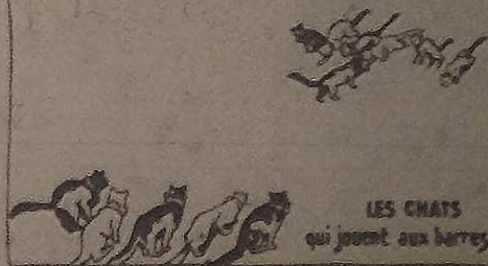


l'unijambiste
LELGOUALCM
jouant de la flûte
sur son propre tibia

DJIZMÉ volontairement
électrocutée par la foudre



L'HORLOGE à VENT du PAYS de COCAINE



LES CHATS
qui jouent aux balles



LES POITRINES à ÉCHOS des FRÈRES ALCOTT



LE SUPPLICE
des
ÉPINILLES

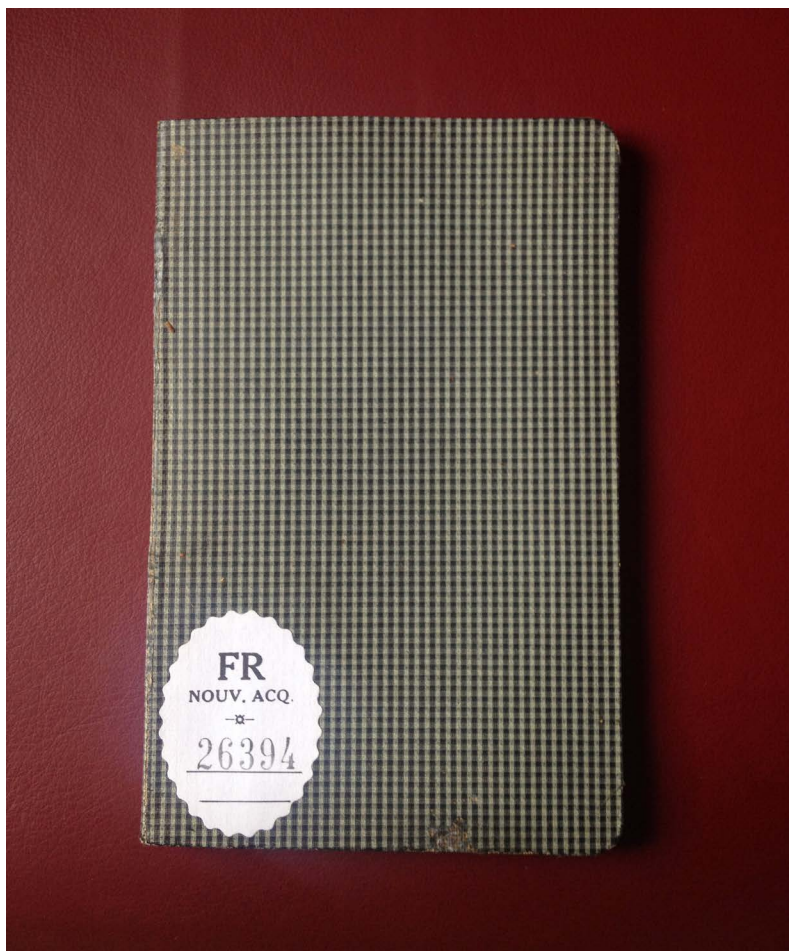


Fig. 8- *Carnet de notes prises durant un voyage en Egypte, 22 novembre – 21 decembre. 1906. Ref. NAF 26394 cote LXV. ©BnF.*

what about *Afrique*? Loading the term *impressions* with all these different meanings, are we to discard all reference to any travelling experience? While Roussel did travel to Africa before the publication, it is not that evident that the characters' paraphernalia bears resemblance to any African impression. For seeing his 'first impressions' of the continent, we have the diary of his travel to Egypt in November 1906, his basic primer of the continent (Fig. 8 & 9).

“22 nov.

Descendu à terre suivis de deux hommes du bateau – visité village – Femmes tatouées sur le menton et aux tempes – Colliers – nous avons fait peur aux enfants – visité les cases – un vieux filait du coton – les femmes ont dit aux hommes “C’est nous qui savons prendre l’argent des étrangers.

[22nd Nov.

Descended to land followed by two men from the boat – visited the village – women, tattooed on the chin and on the temples – necklaces – we scared the children – visited the squares/huts[?] – an old man was spinning cotton – the women told me “we are the ones that know how to take money from foreigners.]”³³

This is page one, the opening of the diary and his arrival to Alexandria. As in Flaubert, there's no description of the coastline à la Gautier, but starts directly from within. Yet, as opposed to the charadesque narrative of the *Impressions*, his diary of the trip is rather banal, composed by simple procedural records of the stay. Nothing sticks out of the itinerary of his steamer sailing up the Nile. If Flaubert's experience of Egypt was synthesised being on-board of a felucca, Roussel's locomotive navigation kept nothing amusing for his journey. And despite his love for Pierre Loti, his diary impression never made its way into any of his works³⁴. The actual first impressions of the continent in the French writer were not an enduring view. Furthermore, this was not a unique feature of the Egyptian sojourn. Roussel travelled a good deal, but his impressions were of no relevance whatsoever for his work. At the end of his life he looked back affirming that

“I have traveled a great deal. Notably, in 1920-1921 I traveled around the world (...) I already knew the principal

(following page)
Fig. 9- 22nd-24th
of November
in *Carnet de notes
prises durant un
voyage en Egypte,
22 novembre – 21
decembre. 1906.*
Ref. NAF 26394
cote LXV.
©BnF

Q.

89-22

M. J. 26394

22 nov.

1

Desendu à terre puis de deux
hommes du bateau - visite village
- Tempes tatouées sur le menton
et aux tempes - Colliers - nous avons
fait peur aux enfants - visité les
cases - un vieux filait du coton
- les femmes ont dit aux hommes
"C'est nous qui savons prendre
l'argent des étrangers"

23

Naviguer, pas desendu à
terre sauf un instant le soir
au coucher du soleil

24

Visite Minich - Promener dans
le bazar - Teinturiers aux mains
toutes bleues - Formes en cuivre pour
repasser les fez - Marmes en
bois au balcon d'un tailleur -
Poste - Gare - Une musique exotique

countries of Europe, Egypt and all of North Africa, and later I visited Constantinople, Asia Minor, and Persia. Now, from all these travels I never took anything in my books. It seems to me that this is worth mentioning, since it clearly shows just how much imagination accounts for everything in my work.”³⁵

This affirmation made François Caradec, his biographer, speculate whether the title *Impressions d’Afrique* had also a double meaning in its second part. His guess is that it can be read as “*impressions* (printing) *à fric* (at the author’s expense)”, concluding that the title was actually a pun with the publishing condition, having little to do with Africa other than “the blacks in the tale.”³⁶ However, I would argue that the novel has a lot to do with Africa, especially with the way the continent was constructed as imaginary for people such as the Surrealists and Leiris – “imagination”, as Roussel indicates, “accounts for everything in my work.” The fourth meaning of *impressions* would be that of an ‘image’, a picture that sticks as mental imagery.

[*Le Voyageur et son Ombre, Michel Leiris, 1935*]

Seated upon a narrow piece of rock, in the shadow of a high cliff, the youthful orator began by recounting his own story to the attentive group we formed, spread out here and there on the soft sand.

(...)Landing on the west coast of Africa, Laubé had sworn never to return upon his tracks; accompanied by a valiant escort, he pushed forward to the east, then, bearing northward, crossed the desert by camel and finally reached Tripoli, the point of arrival he had determined on beforehand.

(Roussel, Raymond. *Impressions of Africa*. 2001. p. 157–158)

This lack of correspondence between the writing and the journeys was noticed by Michel Leiris in 1935, when he himself had recently arrived from his journey to Africa. Leiris was acquainted with Roussel, as his father – Eugène Leiris – was the stockbroker of the Roussel family. Raymond Roussel spent long hours playing piano and impersonating characters for the amazement of the Leiris³⁷. In fact, depressed by his lack of literary success, Roussel affirmed at the end of his life that “[t]he only kind of success I have ever really experienced derived from singing to my own piano accompaniment, and above all my numerous impersonations of actors and ordinary folk. But there at least my success was enormous and complete.”³⁸ The Leiris could claim to be the only ones understanding Roussel – at least in some form of art; perhaps not the *Impressions of Africa* but yes Roussel’s *impressions* of popular characters – and after the death of the writer, Michel Leiris published several articles and literary reviews of Roussel’s books. In this particular one, *Le Voyageur et son Ombre* [The Wanderer and his Shadow]³⁹, Leiris explains the relationship between travel and writing. For it he departs from Roussel’s aforementioned quote on how the places where he travelled didn’t influence his writing, concluding that,

“Roussel n’a jamais à proprement parler voyagé. Il paraît probable, en effet, qu’à aucun moment il ne fut dupe du métier de touriste, que jamais l’extérieur n’entama l’univers qu’il portait en lui et que, de tous les pays visités, il ne voyait que ce qu’il y avait mis d’avance, éléments en absolute correspondance avec cet univers qui lui était particulier [Roussel never really traveled. It seems likely that the outside world never broke through the universe he carried within him, and that, in all the countries he visited, he saw only what he had put there in advance, elements which corresponded absolutely with that universe that peculiar to him.]”⁴⁰

Despite not engaging in touristic forms of travelling, the judgment ‘never travelled’ seems a bit rushed. Roussel did travel, and writing was

LA MAISON ROULANTE de M. Raymond Roussel



Fig. 1. — La « roulotte automobile » photographée dans la propriété de M. Raymond Roussel, à Neuilly.

Nous n'avons pas ici la prétention d'apprendre aux lecteurs de la *Revue* du T. C. F. ce qu'est le Camping ni de leur énumérer les joies profondes qu'il procure à ses adeptes.

En effet, dans presque tous les numéros, un campeur nous crie son allégresse de s'en aller le long des routes, libre, fort, de s'arrêter à sa fantaisie près d'un ruisseau, dans une

prairie, dans un champ, dans une forêt, de coucher enfin sous le ciel immense à l'abri d'un toit léger, loin des autres hommes qui dorment dans les maisons.

Nous voulons simplement signaler un mode extrêmement ingénieux et confortable de pratiquer le camping intégral.

M. Baudry de Saunier dans son

livre la « Joie du camping » sépare les adeptes du camping en deux tribus, qui se jalourent un peu certes, mais qui s'aiment bien tout de même parce qu'en somme elles ont le même drapeau : la tribu des *Spartiates* et celle des *Sybarites*.

Les *Spartiates* ce sont ceux qui s'en vont, soit à pied, soit à bicyclette, en emportant leur maison sur leur dos (une maison de toile qui ne pèse pas 10 kilogs avec tout son mobilier). Ce sont les valeureux, les vaillants du camping.

Les *Sybarites* au contraire ce sont ceux qui font porter leur maison par un véhicule automobile. Et cette maison, ils la veulent bien entendu aussi confortable que possible. Ils entendent retrouver en plein bois ou en plein champs, les douceurs et les avantages du home familial.

C'est donc pour les *Sybarites* surtout que nous allons décrire la très luxueuse et très pratique maison roulante conçue par M. Raymond Roussel. L'auteur d'*Impressions d'Afrique*, dont tant d'esprits distingués vantent le génie, a fait établir sur ses plans, une automobile de 9 mètres de long sur 2 mètres 30 de large.

Cette voiture est une véritable petite maison. Elle comporte en effet, par suite de dispositions ingénieuses : un salon, (fig. 2), une chambre à coucher (fig. 3), un studio (fig. 4), une salle de bains (fig. 6), et même un

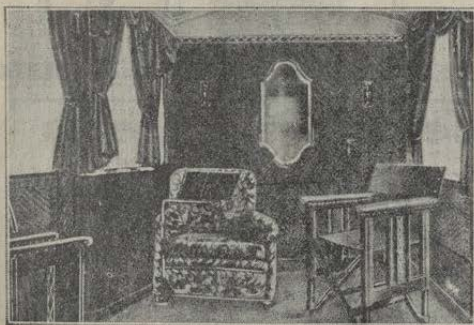


Fig. 2. — Le salon-chambre à coucher sous son aspect de salon, orné de glaces, éclairé par de larges baies et muni de fauteuils confortables.

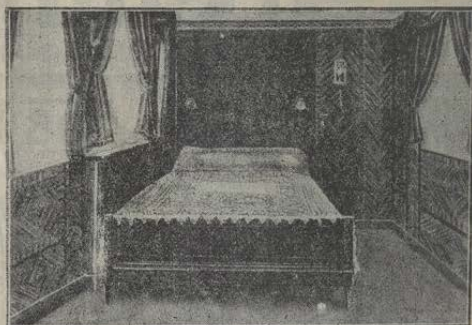


Fig. 3. — Le salon-chambre à coucher disposé pour la nuit. On bascule le lit qui, pendant le jour, est dissimulé dans l'encastrement de la cloison.

petit dortoir pour le personnel qui est composé de trois hommes : (deux chauffeurs et un valet de chambre).

La carrosserie œuvre par Lacoste est d'une grande élégance et son agencement intérieur est aussi original qu'ingénieux. En voici deux exemples : La Chambre à coucher se transforme le jour en studio ou en salon ; quant à la partie avant (derrière le siège du conducteur), elle devient le soir une petite chambre où les trois hommes cités plus haut peuvent tenir à l'aise et faire leur toilette (il y a un lavabo dans le coffrage que l'on aperçoit à gauche du siège du conducteur et du volant de direction (voir figure 5).

La décoration intérieure de la maison roulante de M. Raymond Roussel est signée de Maple.

Il y a le chauffage électrique et une cheminée à gaz d'essence. Le chauffage-bain fonctionne également à gaz d'essence.

Le mobilier a été prévu pour répondre à tous les besoins. Il comprend jusqu'à un coffre-fort Fichet.

Une excellente installation de T. S. F. permet de capter les émissions de tous les postes européens.

Cette description, quoique brève, permet de voir que cette véritable villa roulante — qui peut se compléter d'une cuisine remorque — permet à son propriétaire de retrouver dans un cadre à peine rétréci toutes les douceurs du home familial.

Le châssis sur lequel est montée cette luxueuse installation est un châssis Saurer. En plat, la vitesse normale est de 40 kilomètres à l'heure. Les descentes les plus dures sont abordées sans crainte grâce au dispositif de frein moteur.

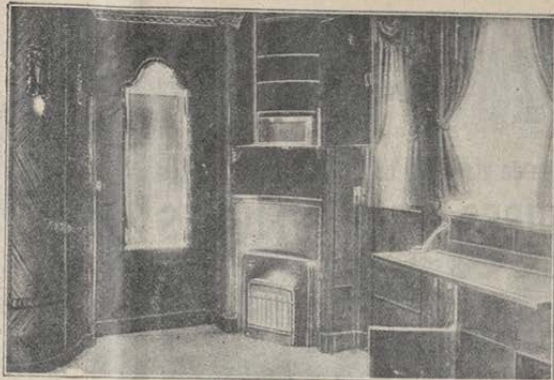


Fig. 4. — Une autre physionomie de jour du salon-chambre à coucher : le studio.

La direction permet un grand « braguage », qualité très appréciable quand on aborde les lacets des routes de montagne.

M. Raymond Roussel n'a pas dessiné et fait exécuter sa roulotte, — comme il l'appelle modestement — pour satisfaire une fantaisie et avec l'arrière-pensée de ne pas s'en servir.

A peine construite, la roulotte est partie l'an dernier, aux beaux jours, effectuer une randonnée de 3.000 km. à travers la Suisse et l'Alsace. Chaque soir M. Roussel changeait d'horizon.

Il a rapporté de son voyage des impressions sans pareilles.

Cette année, dès le retour de l'été, il a repris la route pour s'en aller au gré d'une fantaisie vagabonde à la recherche de sensations constamment renouvelées.

La solution du camping intégral par l'automobile n'est évidemment (1) pas à la portée de tous les budgets. On reste cependant étonné de voir qu'elle demeure si complètement ignorée par ceux qui auraient justement la possibilité de la mettre en pratique.

Il est à souhaiter que l'exemple donné par M. Raymond Roussel sera compris et suivi par de nombreux sybarites et qu'un jour viendra où des maisons roulantes courront nombreuses sur les routes du monde pour le plus délicat plaisir de leurs occupants.

F. T.

(1) Soit par la formule roulotte automotrice, soit par la formule remorque roulotte attelée à une automobile.

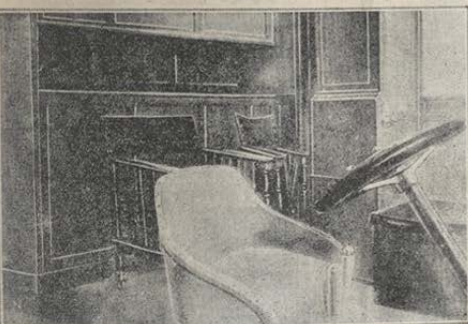


Fig. 5. — Le « quartier » du personnel, le jour ; le soir, trois couchettes à rabattement en font un dortoir.

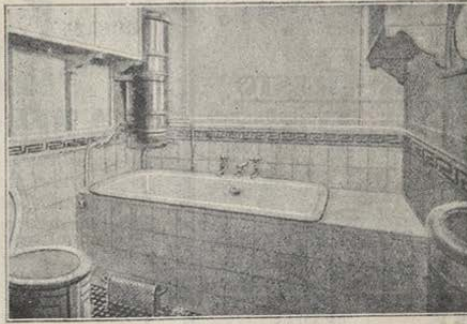


Fig. 6. — La salle de bains, minimum de surface et de l'hygiène bien comprise, c'est-à-dire alliant le luxe à la simplicité.

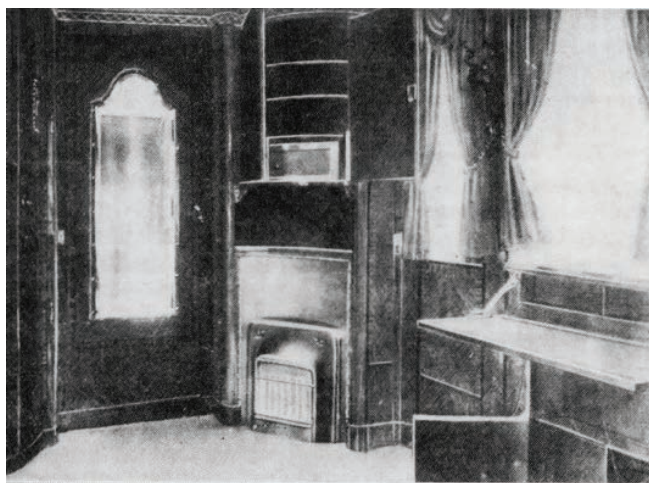
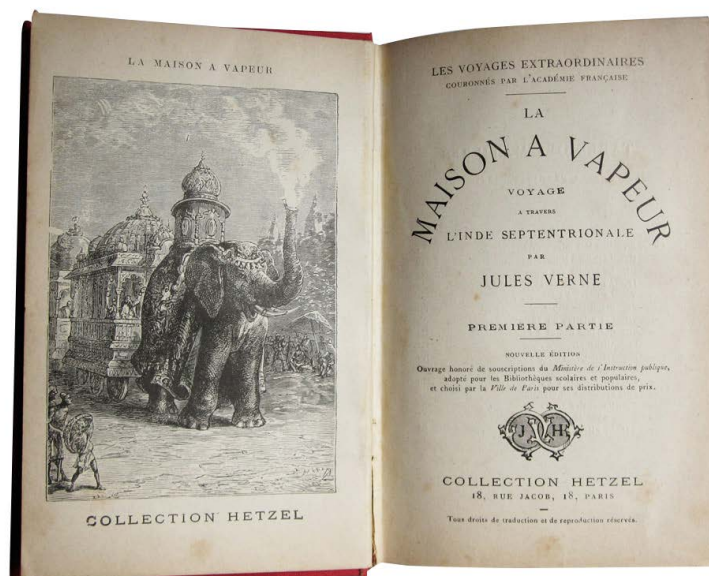


Fig. 11- Jules Verne. *La Maison à Vapeur*. 1880. ©BnF.

Fig. 12- Le studio in *La Maison Routante de M. Roussel* in *La Revue du Touring Club de France*. August 1926. ©BnF.

related to that practice. What Leiris points out is a peculiar relation (previous page) between the *exterior* – that the traveller was traversing – and a form of *interiority* – ‘the universe he carried’. Two elements that were in dissonance. But travel arguably influenced his writing practice a great deal. That split, as Leiris continues in the article, is exemplified in one of Roussel’s invention, a “roulotte automobile”⁴¹, a mobile home. The invention was inspired by Jules Verne’s *Maison à vapeur*⁴² (Fig. 11). However, as opposed to Verne who used it as a literary device for a travelogue through India, Roussel never placed the mobile home within any of his narratives. The roulotte was a 9m by 2.3m motorised caravan, comfortable – if not ostentatiously flamboyant with its bodywork of Lacoste, interior decoration by Maple, electric heating and hot bath⁴³ – which with a series of ingenious arrangements contained “a lounge, a studio, a bedroom, a bathroom and even a sort of small dormitory for his staff of three men – two chauffeurs and a valet”, as it was announced for the first time in the entry page of *L’Illustration*. In that article, they called it “THE NOMADIC VILLA.”⁴⁴ However, the relationship between living, travelling, and, overall, writing was much more complex than nomadism.

To start with, the space was divided in three distinct compartments: the driving cabin at the front, the toilet at the back, and in between a flexible space that could be arranged as lounge, studio and bedroom. It was the central part that was the core of Roussel writing-travelling. In the published image with ‘studio’ arrangement, the table is facing the window (Fig. 12)⁴⁵. But the curtains were to be drawn shut when travelling. Here is where travelling influenced his texts. The journey was a time for Roussel to write⁴⁶. There was a certain sense of interiority when abroad – of being secluded from the exterior he was making his way across. But this was also his practice at some periods back at home. “I used to close the curtains, for I was afraid that the shining rays emanating from my pen might escape into the outside world through even the smallest chink (...)” There was an interior for writing. And this interiority was ultimately to be directed outwards. “(...) I wanted suddenly to throw back the screen

Fig. 10- *La Maison Roulante* de M. Roussel in *La Revue du Touring Club de France*. August 1926. ©BnF.

and light up the world.”²⁴⁷ The writing-travelling of the mobile home was a mechanism of projection, of casting out. The exterior was not to be absorbed, but rather the text was to construct an exterior, to illuminate it. As Leiris concludes,

“Situant par-dessus tout l’Imaginaire, il semble avoir éprouvé pour tout ce qui était théâtre, trompe-l’œil, faux-semblant, un attrait bien plus vif que pour la Réalité. [Placing the imaginary above all else, he seems to have experienced a much stronger attraction for everything that was theatrical, trompe l’œil, illusion, than for real.]”²⁴⁸

The curtains enclosed his practice in the *roulotte*, but only to hold the projection of an imaginary into the exterior. *Impressions* was a paradoxical practice of projection. Nevertheless, his images were still quite obscure for the exterior world. Though his intention was to cast inside-out, still the projected images in Roussel were rather obscure. Nobody seemed to understand his images. As in the entry quote of this section, there’s an orator narrating his journey; however, the actual sojourn in the desert is delivered in one line. Roussel’s *impressions* were consonant with his travelling observances. It was a process of becoming enclosed in his *mobile home*, curtains drawn. The impressions were not fruit of the exterior travelling. They were images generated in a physical interior, but overall from a methodology in which the interior – not only of his room, but furthermore of his mind – played a key role. Roussel had a method for generating the images. And this method unfolded within his mind. It is important to consider now what was the mechanism of production of images in Roussel’s text.

[Comment j’ai écrit certains de mes livres, Raymond Roussel, 1935]

The solemn moment had now arrived when we must proceed to the distribution of the awards.
(Roussel, Raymond. *Impressions of Africa*. 2001. p. 138)

Leiris's *Le Voyageur et son Ombre* was published just some six months before Roussel's posthumous *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres* [How I wrote certain of my books] (1935). This last text was deposited in the printing house by Roussel on April, 16th 1932, with an accompanying letter stating that it was "secret and posthumous"; only to be published after his death⁴⁹. After Roussel's taking his life in Palermo in 1933, Michel Leiris took on himself the task of editing and publishing the last book. The same month that he published the article on Roussel's writing-travelling, he also published an introduction to Roussel's inedited book followed by some fragments of it in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*⁵⁰. The book came out in November 1935, presented as an explanation of Roussel's peculiar writing method. In other words, it was the very much longed-for decipherment of his mystery. Or in Roussel's own introduction, "I have always been meaning to explain the way in which I came to write certain of my books. (...) It involved a very special method. And it seems to me that it is my duty to reveal this method, since I have the feeling that future writers may perhaps be able to exploit it fruitfully."⁵¹ His writing procedure was rather simple. The works, he explains, – among them *Impressions d'Afrique* – were produced by a series of relations between homonymous words. Placed in a sentence, the double meaning of the homonymy generated very different meanings in the same phrase. This could be done by homonymous words with strict correlation in their spelling, or by words with very similar one. This is the case of *Impressions d'Afrique* in which he departed from the words *billard* [billiard] and *pillard* [plunderer] obtaining the phrases:

- "1. *Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard*... [The white letters on the cushions of the old billiard table...]
2. *Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard*... [The white man's letters on the hordes of the old plunderer...]"⁵²

The constraint in the construction of the novel was to begin with the first sentence and to end with the latter. The rest of the story

was to continue this process *en abyme*, with the story been related to one term – billard, and the objects and actions around it – or the other – plunderer⁵³. Of course, this bringing together of two distant realities was a laudable task for the imagination. There's an attractive beauty in the madness of the story been produced by such a rigorous procedure. But what seems more remarkable in Roussel's method is how double meanings were bringing these distances together⁵⁴. For the writer, to achieve clarity was a matter of focus – of centring the sight or the meaning – in one or the other term. The mind-blowing aspect was present only when the two meanings/images were overlapping. *Impressions of Africa* was an exercise of looking at both images simultaneously. *How I wrote certain of my books* was simply to provide the reader with a focusing device.

Roussel's publication of *How I wrote certain of my books* threatened dismantling the allure of his impressions. To a certain degree, explaining the origin of his imaginary would imply giving away the notion of *impressions* I have been working with. However, the matter was no so straightforward. After revealing the secret, *Impressions d'Afrique*, while still impressive as a piece of literary craftsmanship, lost certain allure as *impressions*[rushed judgement] over Africa by gaining clarity as *impressions*[pictures] – being focused. As the images were clarified, they lost their evocative and provocative appeal. For the Surrealist, the revealing of Roussel's method clashed with the uncontrolled, “état passifs [passive states]”⁵⁵ of the automatic writing. It was André Breton that initiated a suspicion over Roussel's literary testament. If he was eager to be understood, why did he keep the explanation for after his death? The “I have always been meaning to explain the way in which I came to write certain of my books” with which Roussel opened the book didn't seem to be a convincing posthumous reasoning. On the contrary, the reasons why he left it postmortem seemed again puzzling. Rather than clarifying, this last work would be seen as new layer of mystery: a “*secret final (...) il n'eût pu être autorisé à se délier* [final secret (...) that he was not allow to unveil.]”⁵⁶, as Breton put it. Whilst Breton's reading of Roussel

was in a rather occultist key, his argument remained as unexplained possibility, and though the biography of Caradec discredits it⁵⁷, a similar line of argument was followed by Michel Foucault. In his only piece of literary review, Foucault published in 1963 a long book on Roussel – translated in English as *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*⁵⁸. His view is that *How I wrote certain of my books* was simply a continuation of the logic Roussel uses in *Impressions of Africa* and *Locus Solus* (1914) in which the puzzling story appears first, only to be clarified in the second part of the novel. However, Foucault argues that the ‘clarifications’ are a disguise instead, a ‘discovery’ that is actually a cover, a tool for perpetuating the never-being-understood obsession of Roussel⁵⁹. Within Roussel’s logic of double meanings, the words do not have explanatory functions, as they always have the possibility of being themselves and something else⁶⁰. In a sense, *How I wrote certain of my books* could never be an explanation, or if it was, it could always mean something else, adding up a layer to the mystery.

[*L’Oeil de l’Ethnographie, Michel Leiris, 1935*]

Talu, with slow strides, then joined the elect whom chance had chosen to serve as his pages. Soon, amidst a profound silence, the Emperor advanced majestically towards the altar, escorted by the privileged children, willingly bearing the train of his dress.

After amounting the steps which led to the sparsely furnished table, Talu signed to Rao to approach with the heavy coronation robe, which he was holding in both hands, inside out. Bending down, the Emperor slipped his head and arms through three openings cut in the centre of the cloth and, as the large folds fell into place, they presently enveloped him down to his feet.

Thus arrayed, the monarch turned proudly to the assembly as if to enable everyone to look at his new costume.

The rich, silky material was decorated with a large map of Africa, showing the principal lakes, rivers and mountains. (Roussel, Raymond. *Impressions of Africa*. 2001. p. 18)

Leiris – of whom Foucault affirmed that “one can say nothing about Roussel today that does not make manifest flagrant debt to Michel Leiris: his articles (...) are the indispensable threshold for a reading of Roussel”⁶¹ – despite of *How I wrote certain of my books*, kept affirming the difficulty of Roussel to be understood⁶². Regardless of this fact, or perhaps precisely because of it, he was keen on reflecting on how these not-fully-understood impressions generated an imaginary of Africa. This is a question he pondered just before departing with the famous Dakar-Djibouti Mission (1931-1933). By then, Leiris was already a former-Surrealist-turned-dissident⁶³. Having trained as ethnographer with Marcel Griaule, he entered what was to be one of the first and, arguably, most ambitious ethnographic expeditions to Africa, of which he was secretary-archivist⁶⁴. In the issue number 7, 1930, the editors of George Bataille’s magazine *Documents*, asked Leiris to sketch for them his “impressions” – as they specifically point – on the journey he was preparing (Fig. 13). Leiris opens the text recalling May 11, 1912. He was then eleven, and that night he attended the staging of Roussel’s *Impressions d’Afrique* at the Théâtre Antoine. The charade of extravagant characters got stuck in his retina, generating an imaginary that left an enduring impression that he summarises as the overlapping “d’une part une Afrique telle, à peu de chose près, qui nous pouvions la concevoir dans notre imagination d’enfants blancs, d’autre part, une Europe de phénomènes et d’inventions abracadabrantes.[on the one hand, an Africa that we could closely relate to our conception of white children’s imagination [Emperor Talu’s tribe], on the other, a Europe of abracadabra-like phenomena and inventions [the shipwrecked crowd of the *Lyncæus*]]”⁶⁵. However, with time and his ethnographical training, he understood the problems of that imaginary Africa. His journey Dakar-Djibouti was intended as erasing of that influence.

“Un voyage d'études effectué selon les disciplines ethnologiques – tel celui auquel je compte collaborer, sous la direction de mon ami Griaule, entre Dakar et Djibouti – doit contribuer à dissiper pas mal de ces erreurs et, partant, à ruiner nombre de leurs conséquences, entre autres le préjugé de races, iniquité contre laquelle on ne s'élèvera jamais assez.

[A research trip developed under the ethnographic disciplines – like the one I'm intending to collaborate with under the direction of my friend Griaule, between Dakar and Djibouti – must help dissipating many of these errors and, therefore, spoil many of the consequences. Among them, the racial prejudices – vice against which one can never struggle enough.]”⁶⁶

The ethnographic mission was a form of dissipation of Roussel's mirage-like *impressions*. Mirages operate by distance, and travelling through the continent was a way of driving away their charms. Leiris encouraged his Surrealist friends – who were only concerned with aesthetic preoccupations of *l'art nègre* – to engage in such dispelling journeys, “non en touristes (...) mais en ethnographes[not as tourist (...) but as ethnographers].”⁶⁷ Leiris proposed “the art of the voyage is, it seems to me, an art of forgetting”; more specifically, “forgetting all questions of skin, of smell, of taste, and every sort of prejudice...”⁶⁸ While the relationship between Surrealism and Ethnography will be too complex to unfold here⁶⁹, it would be worth focusing at this point on the relationship between Roussel's *Impressions* and Leiris' ethnography.

Prior to the mission, Leiris counterposed the ethnographic journey to certain prejudices in Roussel's imaginary. As opposed to the *impressions*, the journey was to operate as *dissipation* – an effacement of the trompe-l'oeil of the ethnographer. Leiris was proposing discarding the kind of imaginary that Roussel's impressions – like the one in the entry quote of the section – generated: an imaginary of tribes and rituals, of ceremonies and robes. An imaginary that, like Talu the emperor's mantle, was an imprint of Africa, a map projected over the territory. An important movement. However, a movement that Leiris

envisions before departure. The actual journey was not so efficacious. If he was proposing to remove the ceremonial robes –giving away with the map over Africa–, removing the robe was fine, however, the fascination with rituals was still there. During and after the journey, the impression of Roussel upon Leiris proved enduring. While these were not in the form of racial prejudices – which specifically he was pointing to in *L'œil et l'Ethnographe* [The eye and the ethnographer] – we can observe certain tension in Leiris in Africa. This tension is fruit of his own position with regards Roussel's form of writing. Placing himself in the antipodes of some aspects of Roussel's practice, Leiris actually also adopted some others. His writing can be argued as a re-definition of Roussel's form of writing, one in which some aspects are rejected, others absorbed. This can be observed in three of his texts.

First, Leiris repositions himself with regards the relevance of travelling. Upon returning from the Dakar-Djibouti mission, a monography was published in Albert Skira's *Minotaure* (Fig. 14). It was issue number two of the magazine. Although Skira was independent from the group of artists, the journal was highly influenced by Surrealism, and the volume became one of the main channels through which the Surrealists welcomed the expedition⁷⁰. Loyal to the collective spirit of the ethnographic enterprise, Leiris refused receiving the editorial credit despite Skira's offering⁷¹. But at least three of the articles are signed by M. L. One, titled *Masques Dogon* [Dogon Masks]⁷² dealt with the masks of this ethnic group in Mali, focusing on the objects themselves – their production and meaning (Fig. 15). It missed, though, placing them in their ritualistic context. Actually, this context was not forgotten, rather it was given beforehand by Leiris in the previous issue of the journal. While looking only at issue number two, it is mostly the ethnographic aspect of the mission that prevails its resonances with Surrealism emerges when placed next to issue number one. In fact, both were published on the same date, June 1, 1933⁷³. Furthermore, the concluding article of the first volume is signed by Leiris, being the last of a list of authors that included

Salvador Dalí, Maurice Heine, Pablo Picasso, and Jacques Lacan. His article, titled *Danses Funéraires Dogon* [Funeral dances of the Dogon]⁷⁴, was the ritualistic context in which the masks obtained full meaning (Fig. 16). It was composed by a series of excerpts of the diary kept while he was *en route*, specifically of the days between September 29 and October 2, 1931. While Roussel refused to introduce any element of the journey in his writings, for Leiris the journey was the text. In these days among the Dogon he attended the funerary rite for the death of one of the oldest ladies in the village. The masks played a key role in the liturgy, and he was the specialist in *institutions religieuses* [religious institutions] of the mission⁷⁵. While his position was “je suis le seul spectateur [I am the only spectator]”⁷⁶, it didn’t mean that he had only an ethnographic position. His diary format records also his own engagement with the tribe – though outside the rite – especially with Ambara, his informant, with whom he concludes the article, in an anecdotal overlapping of Europe and Africa.

“Avant-hier, il[Ambara] m’avait donné des noms de génies, inscrits par se les rappeler sur un petit livret des Actes des Apôtres (qu’il aura dû trouver je ne sais où, ou recevoir des mains de je ne sais quel missionnaire catholique). Ce matin, il racontait à Griaule que, lorsque lui et ses camarades de l’école avaient dit, après une leçon de cosmographie, aux vieux que la terre était ronde, ils avaient été battus. Ce soir, je lui donne un cachet d’aspirine pour faire passer le mal de tête qu’il doit au *dodo* bu hier. [The day before yesterday, he[Ambara] gave me the names of various genies, written so he would remember them in a little booklet copy of the Book of Acts (which he must have found somewhere or given by some Catholic missionary). This morning he was telling Griaule that when, after a cosmography lesson, he and his school comrades told the old men that the earth was round, they were beaten. This evening, I gave him some aspirin to relieve the headache, the result of all the dolo [millet beer⁷⁷] he drunk yesterday.]”⁷⁸

The article was both the affirmation of travel-writing that Roussel disregarded, and the position of ‘writer as narrator of a ritual’ – a



reminiscence of Roussel as narrator of the celebration and ceremony of Emperor Talu VII's coronation.

The second text to indicate the influence of Roussel's method in Leiris are his indexical cards. This form of writing was relevant for the ethnographic mission, but they were not used only during the Dakar-Djibouti Mission – of which Denis Hollier affirms it was “an intense training ground for the systematic technique of note-card filling”⁷⁹. His training as ethnographer and archivist of the mission required the keeping of records in cards (Fig. 18). But beyond the mission, the cards became the technique for the writing of his four-volume autobiography *La Règle du jeu* (1948-76)⁸⁰. For the writing, he used 399 cards packed in a box – inspired by Duchamp's *Green Box*⁸¹ – filled with recollections of his life. Some of them follow the word games or puns of Roussel.

“GLOSSAIRE, J'Y SERRE MES GLOSES
[GLOSSARY; TO PACK, TO CROWD]”⁸²
Or,
“JAZZ-JASE EN ZIGZAG. JE JOUE,
JE JOUIS, JE GEINS!
[JAZZ-BABBLE IN ZIGZAG. I PLAY, I REACH
ECTASY, I MOAN!]”⁸³

The cards overlap the ethnographic logic of indexation with the poetics of Roussel's word-games. But furthermore, they become a device that doesn't belong to the final form of the text – his biography *La Règle du jeu* (1948-76) – but gives structure to its construction, a scaffolding of a sort, or a way of writing his books.

Finally, the third text to look at is Leiris's *L'Afrique Fantôme* (1934)⁸⁴, which was published a year after the article. This time, Leiris poured his entire diary of the mission out into a book. His preconceived idea of the voyage as dissipation of Roussel's imaginary was, to a certain degree, informed by his recent formation as ethnographer. Marcel Mauss, sociologist whose lectures Leiris had attended before leaving

(previous page)
Fig. 15- Leiris,
Michel. *Masques
Dogon in Minotaure*.
1933. Vol. 2. pp.
45-47.

Fig. 16- Leiris,
Michel. *Danses
Funéraires Dogon in
Minotaure*. 1933.
Vol. 1. p. 73-
75.

(facing page)
Fig. 17- Michel
Leiris writing his
diary, from Leiris,
Michel. *Miroir de
l'Afrique*. 1996.
Paris. Gallimard.
p.197.

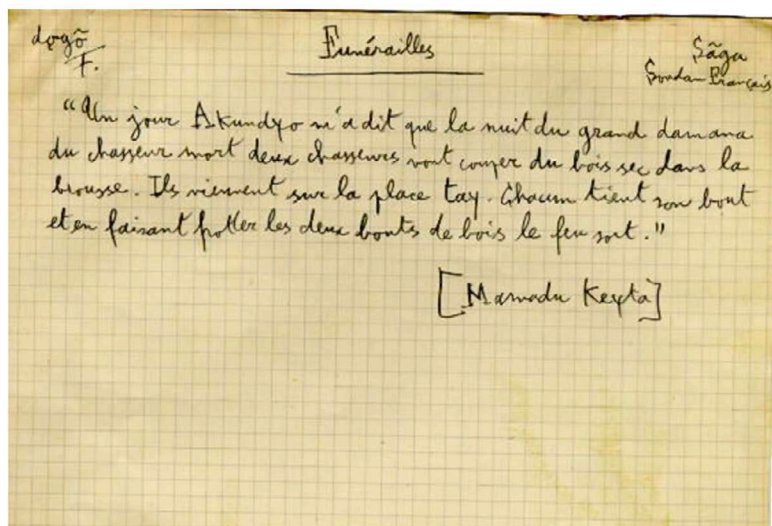


Fig. 18- Leiris, Michel. *Funérailles (5) d'un chasseur*. Fiche de
Leiris reproduisant texte Mamadou Keyta. October 1931. Ref.
fmg_D_a_04_070_18. Bibliothèque Eric-de-Dampier. LESC. MAE.
Université Paris Nanterre. ©Université Paris Nanterre

Paris, recommended: “The first work method consists in using a travel journal, in which one notes everything the work accomplished during the day: a listing of index cards filled out and objects collected is compiled in this journal, which comes to constitute an easily consultable inventory.”⁸⁵ While the inventory could be conceived of as a possible mechanism of dissipation before departure, at some point en route it turned up to be not so clear. Even if Mauss clarified that the notebook “is a matter of reproducing native life, not of proceeding by giving one’s impression”⁸⁶, his diary entries started departing from being a product of an observing-eye, introducing subjective judgements, digressions and quixotic passages⁸⁷. The notebook, “quickly shifted toward a ‘diary’ [*journal intime*]”⁸⁸, as Leiris himself explained the movement.

“Thus was constructed *Phantom Africa*, which consists essentially in the reproduction of narrative or impressionistic notes that the author kept from day to day, no less attentive to what was unfolding in his head and in his heart than to all the extraordinarily diverse things that touched him from outside, in ways that were likewise diverse (by direct apprehension, as pure information, or through live participation).”⁸⁹

With his original critique to Roussel’s imaginary Leiris proposes a different travelling writing. A practice that moves away from *impressions*, however not to an “objective detached” form of writing, but to what we could call *intimations*— following his *journal intime*. This repositioning from *impressions* to *intimations* brings with it a different relation between the writer and the exterior. To Roussel’s drawn curtains on the road, Leiris lets himself ‘be touched from the outside’. However, rather than describing an exterior, that inputs are meditated/mediated inside “in his head and in his heart”. The *intimations* are not mechanisms of dissipation. They suggest a deeper plunging, a construction of the landscape that works by immersion.

Phantom Africa is a fascinating book, difficult to define, but here we simply note Leiris’ own description in the edition of 1981⁹⁰.

“ce journal à double entrée, essentiellement succession de flashes relatifs à des faits subjectifs, aussi bien qu’à des choses extérieures (vécues, vues ou apprises) et qui, regardé sous un angle mi-documentaire, mi-poétique, me semble [...] valoir d’être proposé à la appréciation... [this journal with double-entries, essentially a succession of flashes regarding subjective facts, as well as external things (lived, seen or learned) and which, observed under a half-documentary, half-poetic angle, seems (...) to be proposed a value to consider]”⁹¹

Not really the scientific objective look intended by Griaule’s expedition. Again, Leiris’s was a question of overlapping views. A stereoscopy in which the external – half-documentary – is seen together with the subjective – half-poetic. After planning a *dissipating* journey, the preconceived impressions were rejected. However, Roussel’s writing method converted Leiris’ Africa in a *fantôme*. The whole of the continent becomes an elusive object of knowledge. As Brent Hayes Edwards argues about the title of the book, “the word ‘phantom’ is an insistence that all he discovered in Africa was a succession of ‘false appearances’ (from Leiris’ diary, 12 January 1933) or mirages.”⁹² In Leiris’ *intimations*, the mirage is still the paradigmatic form through which the landscape is perceived.

Whilst Roussel’s imaginary was to be dispelled through the journey, his writing method ended up becoming a technique, a system intersecting with his ethnological practice, the rules of the game of his biography, or, the way Leiris wrote certain of his books.

[*Autour des Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique*, Michel Leiris,
1939]

Standing upright behind the funeral slab was a hoarding covered in black material, which presented to the viewer a series of twelve water colours, arranged symmetrically, in four rows of three. The resemblance between the characters suggested that the pictures were concerned with some dramatic narrative. (...)

The Secret Correspondence, which began a new row of sketches, showed the woman in the cloak offering Flora one of those special grids which are necessary to decipher certain cryptograms and which consist of a single card with oddly placed perforations.

(Roussel, Raymond. *Impressions of Africa*. 2001. p. 12-13)

Roussel's greatest achievement is managing to have never been understood. In 1939, Leiris reviewed the *Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique* (1932)⁹³, the last book to be published in Roussel's life. It was yet another book on Africa, this time in verse, accompanied by a series of 59 illustrations that Roussel commissioned from the hack Basque painter Henri-Achille Zo to be produced from his descriptions⁹⁴. Reviewing the book, Leiris affirmed that "[d]e toutes les oeuvres de Raymond Roussel, aucune, peut-être, ne reste aussi énigmatique que les *Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique*. [Of all the works of Raymond Roussel, none, perhaps, remains as enigmatic as the *New Impressions of Africa*.]"⁹⁵ Partly due to the fact that this last poem was not composed following the methodology explained in *How I wrote certain of my books*, Leiris finds it "le plus difficile d'accès, (...) la plus grande épaisseur de secret. [the most difficult to access/enter, (...) the greatest thickness of secrecy.]"⁹⁶ A Roussel never understood was a Roussel at his best. It is this thickness, this depth of mystery that is read in Roussel's oeuvre. Not been able to come up with a sense to the mysterious poem, Leiris finds his only way of entering the mirage of Roussel's text through one of the illustrations. The Indian ink vignette shows a man at his desk writing, produced following Roussel's description: "a man writes, 403



Fig. 19- Zo, Henri-A. *Illustration 42 for Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique* by Raymond Roussel. 1932.

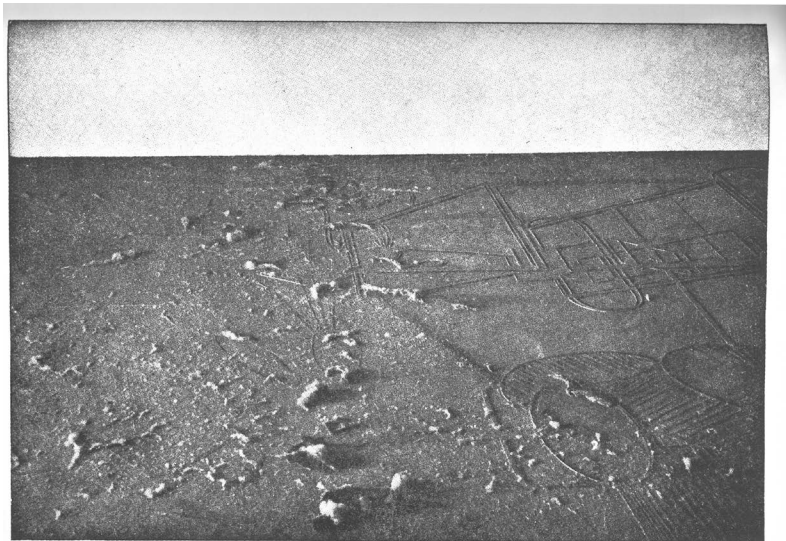
with laborious airs, a list of nouns (if the nouns are readable, they have to be cryptographs.)”⁹⁷ (Fig. 19) Leiris reviews the image, “Le personnage au cryptogramme de la figure 42 nous incite à ne pas oublier que la cryptographie est l’un des thèmes les plus constants de l’auteur et que les *Nouvelles Impressions*...peuvent donc être envisagées sous cet angle.[The character with cryptogram of figure 42 reminds us that cryptography is one of the most recurrent themes of the author and that *Nouvelles Impressions*...can be considered under this angle.]”⁹⁸ And he insists on reading Roussel’s text as containing some sort of mystery that is to be decoded, something that we cannot fully know. This image of Roussel’s practice as cryptographer has endured. It is the same term that Breton uses for describing the world-view for the Surrealists in his 1953 manifesto *Du Surréalisme en ses Oeuvres Vives*, a text in which Roussel appears as one of the *oeuvres vives*[living works] of Surrealism. “Le monde (...) s’offre à lui comme un cryptogramme qui ne demeure indéchiffrable (...) [The world (...) appears to him [the surrealist] as cryptogram, that does not remain indecipherable.]”⁹⁹

But in this cryptographic text, it is interesting to see the origin of the *Nouvelle Impressions*, its generative encryption. As it was described by Roussel, and noted in the review by Leiris, the original project emerged from the following idea.

“It concerned a miniature pair of opera glasses worn as a pendant whose two lenses, two millimetres in diameter and meant to be held up to the eye, contained photographs on glass depicting Cairo bazaars on one side and a bank of the Nile at Luxor on the other.”¹⁰⁰

Again, a stereoscopic image constructs a vision of North Africa. An original project that converted, in Leiris’ view, the poem in a “texte quasi cryptographique qui dans sa texture même semble une image du vertige (...) [a quasi-cryptographic text which under its very texture resembles an image of vertigo.]”¹⁰¹

In the reception of Roussel’s texts here are the ingredients we have worked so far. A mirage that is projected image (*Impression*), constructed 405



VOICI LE DOMAINE DE ROSE SÉLAVY
COMME IL EST ARIDE — COMME IL EST FERTILE —
COMME IL EST JOYEUX — COMME IL EST TRISTE !

VUE PRISE EN AÉROPLANE
PAR MAN RAY — 1921.

Fig. 20- Ray, Man. *Voici le Domaine de Rose Sélavy...Vue Prise en Aéroplane.* 1921.

as *mise en abyme* (Leiris' *Nouvelle Impressions d'Afrique*), *trompe-l'oeil* (Leiris' *Impressions d'Afrique*), and double-image (*Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique*). Yet, these belong to the *un-understood* Roussel. It was a Roussel as *cryptographer* (Leiris and Breton) whose impressions produced an Africa of mystery and irrational knowledge, but furthermore an Africa whose signs were very vaguely defined. In a way, the imaginary of *Impressions of Africa* was read as Man Ray's famous photograph of Duchamp's *Large Glass* covered with dust in his New York apartment. An image that was first published in Breton's magazine *Littérature*, volume 5, accompanied by the caption

“Voici le domain de Rose Sélavy / Comme il est aride
 – comme il est fertile / comme il est joyeux – comme
 il est triste! Vue prise en aéroplane par Man Ray – 1921.
 [Behold the domain of Rose Sélavy / how arid it is – how
 fertile it is / how joyous it is – how sad it is! View from an
 aeroplane by Man Ray – 1921.]” (Fig. 20).

A photograph that is documentation of a work of art, but that is read as aerial view of a desert, cartographic tracing of the domain of Rose Sélavy – a female persona with which Duchamp disguised himself¹⁰². A Rousselian pun played at the level of the image, due to the blurry sign. Not for anything did Duchamp claimed “[c]’est Roussel qui, fondamentalement, fut responsable de mon *Verre* (...) [It was fundamentally Roussel the responsible for my *Verre* [Large Glass]]”¹⁰³. While this conception of Roussel generated an imaginary that could appeal the Surrealists, it is one which Leiris’s ethnography was working against. To that Africa of the ‘thickness of secrecy’, the domain of Roussel’s Africa still had another feature.

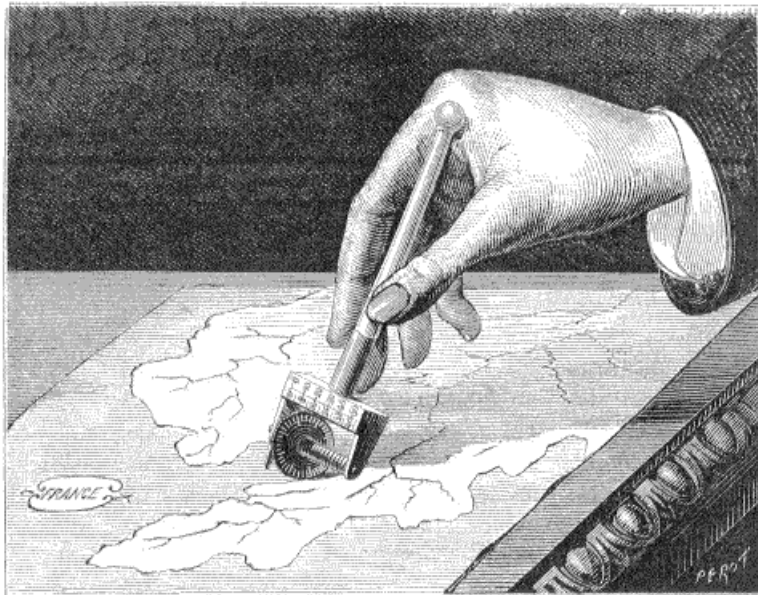
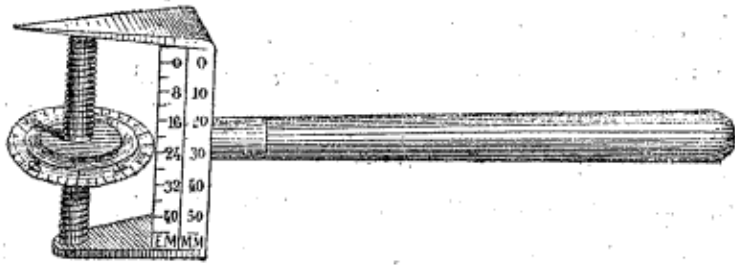
Leiris’ argues that the exegetical key for Roussel’s books is to be found within the text. As in the quote opening the section, there reader is presented the object that gives a clue for the meaning, its Rosetta stone, or “one of those special grids which are necessary to decipher certain cryptograms”. Leiris proposes a literal image, ‘the character with cryptogram of figure 42’. What I would argue is that that reading of Roussel needs to be complemented with the character of



figure 32 (Fig. 21). Roussel's instructions described it as "[u]n homme utilisant un campylomètre sur une carte de géographie. [a man using a *campylomètre* in a geographical map.]"¹⁰⁴ The *campylomètre* is a clue for entering Roussel's "greatest thickness of secrecy." The *campylomètre* was a portable cartographic instrument invented by Francisque Gaumet in 1879¹⁰⁵, used in the procedure of measuring distances in maps (Fig. 22). In the case of Roussel's work, the instrument was not so relevant as a means for "lecture des cartes [reading of maps]"¹⁰⁶, but for associating his construction of Africa with it been the fruit of an extremely mechanical and precise methodology. Africa, as Leiris associated, was a mirage. However, this elusive condition for the viewer was not so for the writer. His mirage is a visual trick. However, it corresponds to precise forms of construction. It was a landscape of illusion; however, one that a *campylomètre* could measure; a landscape behind whose illusion concealed an entire system of writing holding it together. If we look back at the entry quote of this section, Roussel describes "one of those special grids which are necessary to decipher certain cryptograms and which consist of a single card with oddly place perforations". Africa was the landscape presented to the viewer; the writer always had a system, a grid for constructing it, or a *campylomètre* to measure it. There was no contradiction between rigour and mind-blowingness. It is important to bear in mind that Roussel's Africa was not only a subconscious imaginary. Not only, as post-colonial researcher Achille Mbembe argues, "[Africa] is the mediation that enables the West to accede to its own subconscious and give a public account of its subjectivity."¹⁰⁷ Furthermore what is interesting in Roussel's is that its construction was not unconscious, but the product of a strict method.

(facing page) Fig.
21- Zo, Henri-A.
Illustration 32
for Nouvelles
Impressions
d'Afrique by
Raymond Roussel.
1932.

Roussel introduced a form of knowledge of an Africa which is never understood but is instead the outcome of a systematic, mindful method. If Saint-Exupéry originally showed a dichotomy between reason and mirage – his split monologue – what Roussel opened up is the possibility of the two coming together. The fascinating aspect of



Le campylomètre du lieutenant Gaumet.

Fig. 22- Gaumet, F. *Campylomètre* in

a. *Mémoires de la société des ingénieurs civils*. 1879. Vol. 32. p. 727.

b. *La Nature*. Premier semestre, 1880. p.300. ©BnF

Roussel's Africa is that it was a mirage highly rigorously constructed. Tracing the coordinates of understandings and misunderstandings, of *impressions* and *intimations*, this chapter aimed at becoming a *campylomètre* of a sort. It gives us a tool for approaching mirages. One that helps formulating a context at the verges of ethnographic practice which forms the background for the next stop.

Endnotes

1. Malraux, André. 1968. p. 272.
2. Finally, it was published by Pléiade in 1996 within Malraux, André. *Œuvres complètes. Tome II*. 1996. Paris, Pléiade.
3. Malraux, André. *Lawrence and the Demon of the Absolute* in *The Hudson Review*. Winter, 1956, vol. 8. no. 4, pp. 519-532. Between November 1940 and the year 1943, Malraux prepares the writing of Lawrence's biography, entitled *Le Démon de l'absolu*. The book, composed of a preamble and five parts, was finally not finished and remained unpublished. The only fragment he published was his *N'était-ce donc que cela?* in 1946.
4. See *Excursus in Arabia Deserta* 1 note 3.
5. cf. Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *Wind, Sand and Stars*. New York, Reynal & Hitchcock. 1939. p. 11.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
8. This notion of the desert as removal of the veil is continued by Jean Baudrillard in his book *Amérique* [America] (1986) and his notion of 'the desert of the real'.
9. Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. 1939. p. 131.
10. cf. Bunkse, Edmund V. *Saint-Exupéry's Geography Lesson: Art and Science in the Creation and Cultivation of Landscape Values* in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, March 1990. Vol. 80, No. 1. pp. 96-108.
11. *Wisdom of the Sands* is the English translation for Saint-Exupéry's posthumous book *Citadelle* (1948), a book that "has obvious resemblances, both in form and content, to Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*." (Rumbold, Richard. *The Winged Life, A portrait of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, poet and airman*. 1953. London, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p. 206.
12. cf. Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. 1939. pp. 171-236; as well as, Rumbold, Richard. 1953. pp. 137-141.
13. cf. Pascual, Emilio. *Apéndice* in Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *Vuelo nocturno*. 1982. Madrid, Ediciones Anaya. pp. 175-176 as well as, Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. 1939.

p. 173-175.

14. cf. Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. 1939. pp. 194-195.

15. Ibid., p. 197.

16. Ibid., p. 201.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 213-214.

19. For this give and take experience of the beholder, cf. Gombrich, Ernst H. *The beholder's Share* in *Art and Illusion*. 1960. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, which though it is treating psychological relationship in the beholder of art, it suffices for us to indicate the concession of faculties of reason.

20. Rossi provides the quote on Roussel's Trophies Square, describing it as "a true architectural project." Both quotes are from Rossi, Aldo. *A Scientific Autobiography*. 1981. London, The MIT Press. p. 29.

21. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 1987. London, Penguin Books. p. 177.

22. As François Cadadec call the years 1877-1897 in Roussel's biography. cf. Cadadec, François. *Raymond Roussel; the biography by François Caradec, trans. by Ian Monk*. 2001. London, Atlas Press. pp. 12-55.

Roussel has been related to Proust in his writing but also in the fact that they were neighbours and, though distantly, acquainted. cf. *ibid*.

23. Cadadec, François. *Raymond Roussel; the biography by François Caradec, trans. by Ian Monk*. 2001. London, Atlas Press. p. 47.

24. cf. *Ibid*., p. 352. For a narration of the last days of Roussel in Sicily, *ibid*., pp. 337-352. Also, Leiris, Michel. *Le Voyageur et son Ombre* in *La Bête Noire*, April 1st, 1935. p. 8.

25. cf. *Ibid*., p. 95-96.

26. As translated in *ibid*., p. 99.

27. In R85558 microfilm *Raymond Roussel. Documents Concernant Ses Oeuvres* in Département des Manuscrits. Service Photographique. Bibliothèque Nationale. Paris, as well as in Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 103.

28. cf. *Ibid*. p. 101-105.

29. As quoted in Cherniack-Tzuriel, Abba. 1976. p.108

30. Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 105.

31. cf. *ibid*., p. 149.

32. cf. *ibid*., p.100.

33. Roussel, Raymond. *Carnet de notes prises durant un voyage en Egypte, 22 novembre – 21 decembre*. 1906. Ref. NAF 26394 cote LXV. Archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

34. Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 85.
35. Roussel, Raymond. *How I Wrote Certain of my Books*. 1995. London, Exact Change. p. 20.
36. Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 100.
37. For the relationship between the Roussel family and the Leiris, see Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 74-78.
38. Roussel, Raymond. 1995. p. 28.
39. I have translated the title in English the way Nietzsche's homonymous title in French was translated into English.
40. cf. Leiris, Michel. 1935. p. 8.
41. Ibid.
42. cf. Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 254.
43. cf. *La Maison Roulante de M. Roussel* in *La Revue du Touring Club de France*. August 1926. pp. X-XI.
- Lacoste is not to be confused with René Lacoste's brand. It made reference to Lacoste J., Car Repairs and Sales, Rue Armand-Sylvestre, Courbevoie (Seine) and 30, Boulevard de Strasbourg (Paris). cf. Duboy, Philippe. *The Traveller and his Shadow Raymond Roussel's 'Maison Roulant'* in *Daidalos*. 15 June 1988. Vol. 28. p. 62.
44. *L'Illustration*, 26th February 1926.
45. As he affirmed, "[a]ll I need for writing purposes is a bare table, some blank sheets of paper, that's all." Roussel, Raymond. 1995. p. 38.
46. cf. Asherby, John. *Introduction* in Roussel, Raymond. 1995. p. xi. As well as Letcher, Piers. *Eccentric France: The Bradt Guide to Mad, Magical and Marvellous France*. 2003. London, Bradt Travel Guides. p. 154.
47. cf. Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 59.
48. Leiris, Michel. 1935. p. 8.
49. cf. Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 320.
50. cf. Leiris, Michel. *Raymond Roussel* in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. April 1935. pp. 575-582; and Roussel, Raymond. *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres* in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. April 1935. pp. 583-615.
51. Roussel, Raymond. 1995. p. 3.
52. Ibid., p. 4.
53. Ibid., pp. 5-7.
54. Dalí's double images in his painting *Impressions of Africa* (1938) were playing an overlapping of painted reality and illusion, bringing the two close together. cf. Whitfield, Sarah. *Dalí's Optical Illusions. Hartford, Washington, and Edinburgh in The Burlington Magazine*. 2000. Vol. 142. pp. 518-519.

55. Dalí, Salvador. *Interprétation Paranoïaque-critique de l'Image obsédante "L'Angélus" de Millet* in *Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 1. pp. 65-67.
56. Breton, André. *Fronton Virage* in Ferry, Jean. *Une Étude sur Raymond Roussel*. 1953. Paris, Arcanes. p. 22.
57. Cadadec, François. 2001. p. 320. p. 320.
58. Foucault, Michel. *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*. trans. Charles Ruas. 1986. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
59. cf. Ibid. chapter 1.
60. cf. Foucault, Michel. *Speaking and Seeing in Raymond Roussel* p. 51 (variant of first chapter of *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, which was first published in *Lettre Ouverte* 4. Summer 1962. pp. 38-51).
61. Ibid., footnote 2.
62. cf. Leiris, Michel. *Autour des 'Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique'* in *Cahiers G.L.M.*, March 1939. Vol. IX. p. 28.
63. Walker, Ian. *Phantom Africa: Photography between Surrealism and Ethnography* in *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*. 1997. Vol. 36, Cahier 147. p. 642.
64. Griaule, Marcel. *Mission Dakar-Djibouti, Rapport Général. Mai 1931-Mai 1932*. May, 4th 1932. p. 8.
65. Leiris, Michel. *L'œil de l'Ethnographe* in *Documents*. 1930. No. 7. p. 407. My clarifications.
66. Ibid., p. 413.
67. Ibid.
68. Leiris, Michel. *L'Abyssinie intime* in *Mer et outre-mer*. 1935, June. Vol. 1. As quoted in Brent Hayes Edwards' Introduction in Leiris, Michel. *Phantom Africa*. Trans. by Brent Hayes Edwards. 2017. London, Seagull Books. p. 5.
69. For the relationship between Surrealism and Ethnography see Clifford, James. *On Ethnographic Surrealism in Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Oct. 1981. Vol. 23, No. 4. pp. 539-564. For a summary of the polemic after Clifford's bringing the two together, see Richardson, Michael. *An Encounter of Wise Men and Cyclops Women. Consideration of debates on surrealism and anthropology* in *Critique and Anthropology*. 1993. Vol. 13 (1). pp. 57-75.
70. cf. Walker, Ian. 1997. p. 639.
71. Ibid., p. 641.
72. Leiris, Michel. *Masques Dogon* in *Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 2. pp. 45-51.
73. cf. Ibid., p. 639.
74. cf. Leiris, Michel. *Danses Funéraires Dogon* in *Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 1. pp. 73-76.
75. He was "spécialisé dans l'étude des sociétés d'enfants, des sociétés séniles et des

institutions religieuses.” (Griaule, Marcel. *Mission Dakar-Djibouti, Rapport Général. Mai 1931-Mai 1932*. May, 4th 1932. p. 8.)

76. Leiris, Michel. 1933. p. 74.

77. As explained in Brent Hayes Edwards’ Introduction in Leiris, Michel. *Phantom Africa* trans. by Brent Hayes Edwards. 2017. York, Penn., USA, Seagull Books. p. 49.

78. Leiris, Michel. 1933. p. 76. As translated in Leiris, Michel. 2017. p.180.

79. Hollier, Denis. *Notes (On the Index Card)* in *October*. Spring, 2005. Vol. 112. p. 39.

80. Published as: Vol. 1- *Biffures*, 1948; Vol. 2- *Fourbis*, 1955; Vol. 3- *Fibrilles*, 1966; Vol. 4- *Frele bruit*, 1976

81. cf. Hollier, Denis. Spring, 2005. p. 35.

82. In Marmande, Francis. *Michel Leiris: The Letter to Louise* in *Yale French Studies*. Vol. 81. 1992. (pp. 28-34) p. 30.

83. Ibid., p. 30.

84. A text that is considered by Francis Marmande “an unexpected sequel to Raymond Roussel’s *Impressions d’Afrique* (...)” Marmande, Francis & Rischin, Abigail S. *Michel Leiris: The Letter to Louise* in *Yale French Studies*. 1992. No. 81 (*On Leiris*). p. 28.

85. Mauss, Marcel. *Manuel d’ethnographie*, p. 16. As quoted in Brent Hayes Edwards’ Introduction in Leiris, Michel. *Phantom Africa* trans. by Brent Hayes Edwards. 2017. York, Penn., USA, Seagull Books. p. 11.

86. Ibid.

87. Brent Hayes Edwards’ Introduction in Leiris, Michel. *Phantom Africa* trans. by Brent Hayes Edwards. 2017. York, Penn., USA, Seagull Books. p. 11.

88. Leiris, Michel. *Prière d’insérer de la Bibliothèque des Science Humaines*. 1981. p. 749. As quoted in Brent Hayes Edwards’ Introduction in Leiris, Michel. *Phantom Africa* trans. by Brent Hayes Edwards. 2017. York, Penn., USA, Seagull Books. p. 11.

89. Ibid. p. 12.

90. Along with the first edition of 1934, there was another of 1951, previous to the one of 1981.

91. Leiris, Michel. *L’Afrique Fantôme*. 1981. Paris, Gallimard. p. 9, as quoted in Walker, Ian. 1997. p. 645.

92. Brent Hayes Edwards’ Introduction in Leiris, Michel. 2017. p. 52.

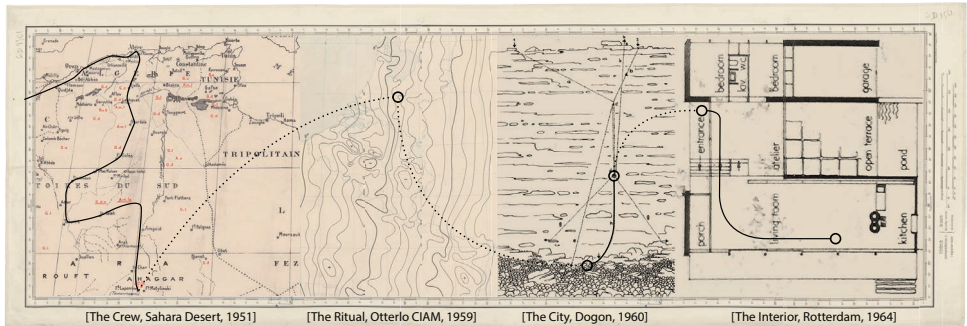
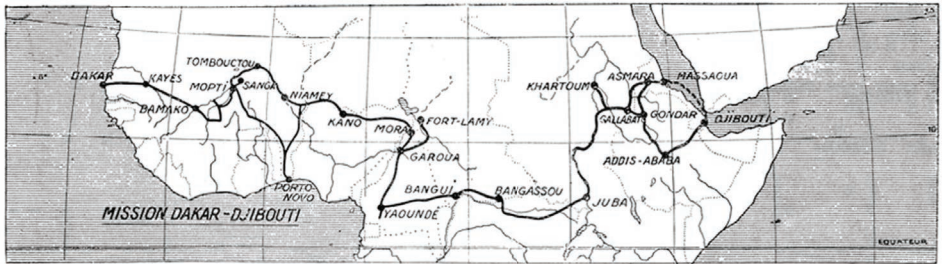
93. Leiris, Michel. *Autour des Nouvelles Impressions d’Afrique* in *Cabiers G.L.M.* March 1939. Vol. 9. pp. 28-36.

94. These descriptions are published in the same issue of *Cabiers G.M.L.* preceding Leiris’s review of the poem. See also Roussel, Raymond. *Introduction in Nouvelles Impressions d’Afrique: orné de cinquante-neuf dessins de H.-A. Zo*. 2015. Paris, Éditions

- Ombres. pp. 10-13. And Roussel, Raymond. 1995. pp. 104-166.
95. Ibid., p. 28.
96. Ibid.
97. Roussel, Raymond. *Indications pour 59 dessins* in *Ibid.*, p. 25.
98. Leiris, Michel. March 1939. p. 33.
99. Breton, André. *Du Surréalisme en ses Oeuvres Vives* in *Manifestes du Surréalisme* (ed. Jean-Jacques Pauvert). 1972. Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert. pp. 353-363.
100. Roussel, Raymond. 1995. p. 27, as well as quoted in Leiris, Michel. 1939. p. 28.
101. Leiris, Michel. 1939. p. 29.
102. For a trajectory of how Man Ray was used for a wide variety of meanings, see Campamy, David. *A Handful of Dust*. 2015. Paris, MACK. which is a catalogue for the exhibition *A Handful of Dust: from the Cosmic to the Domestic* at LE BAL, Paris, 16 October 2015- 17 January 2016.
103. As quoted in Raillard, Georges. *Roussel, les fils de la Vierge*, in the catalogue *L'Oeuvre de Marcel Duchamp*(vol. III). 1977. Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.
104. Roussel, Raymond. *Indications pour 59 dessins* in Roussel, Raymond. 1995, p. 23.
105. cf. *Mémoires de la société des ingénieurs civils*. 1879. Vol. 32. p. 726-728.
106. Ibid., p. 728.
107. Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. 2001. Berkeley, University of California Press. p. 3.



Stop 5 *Ex Africa Aliquid Novum.*
Algerian Sahara, 1951.



[*The Crew, Sahara Desert, 1951*]

“(...) a man enveloped in a white burnous which swelled out behind him in the wind like a parachute, cycling like one possessed, in a temperature of 48 degrees, across the immense plateau of the Tademait where there is nothing and where nothing grows. We watched him cycling by and wondered what the purpose of his frenzied ride might be.” Corneille, ‘De mannen van de Hoggar’ in *Het Parool*, 7 January 1955¹.

The cyclist riding freewheel over the smooth surface of the desert is, weirdly enough, a canonical form of mirage. It doesn’t seem to belong to the Amsterdamer subconscious only – the case of Corneille – but to further Western illusions, as Reyner Banham famously reported seeing “an elderly lady in a print dress and wool cardigan riding a tall dignified English bicycle”² heading her pedalling south in the middle of the Mojave Desert. But while the leisure pedaller seems at odds with the harsh landscape, in Corneille’s vision the mind-blowing element is not only the vanishing image, but furthermore the viewers themselves – a crew composed by the CoBRa painter, four architects, a surrealist-inspired sculptor, a graphic illustrator, a wife and a vehicle mechanic driving a military jeep southwards through the Algerian Sahara. Whatever their intentions, particularly of the four architects, they seem to be entirely displaced, with no built environment in hundreds of kilometres around. The image of a group of architects driving across the desert could resonate more familiarly after Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown took their Yale students to Las Vegas. Yet, this American version was almost twenty years late. In Corneille’s car, architects Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan already were in ethnographical research to the oasis-cities of the Sahara in 1951. The Algerian prefiguration enables us to question the figure of the crew of architects in the desert, in the inception of architecture becoming anthropologised³.

Op 't nieuwe Burgerweeshuys te Amsterdam

*Tot Troost van den voortreffelycken
Bouwmeester, den Heer Aldo van Eyck*

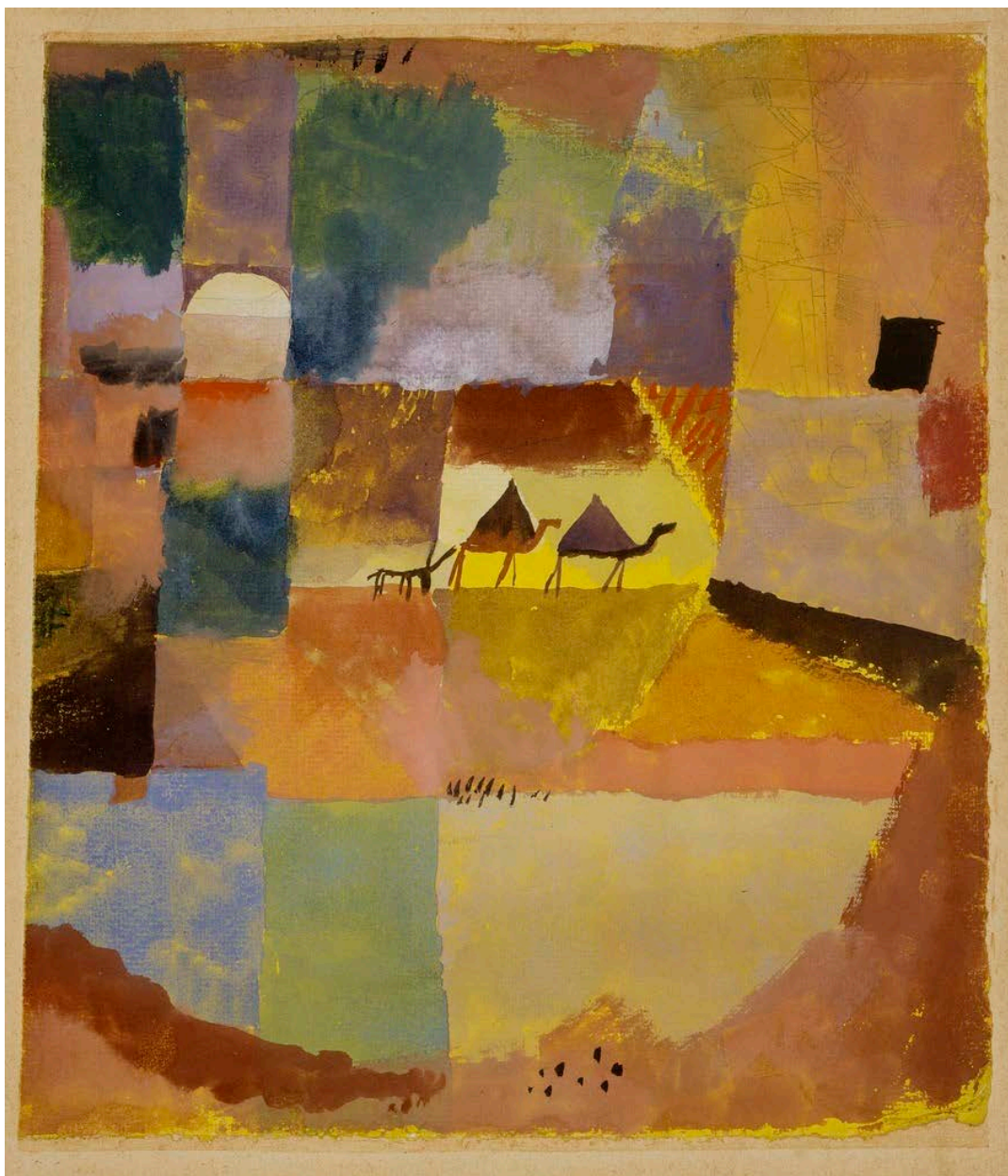


Fig. 1- Metz, Lex. *Op't nieuwe Burgerweeshuys te Amsterdam* in
Niet om het even : wel evenwaardig : van en over Aldo van Eyck. 1986.
Rotterdam, Stichting Rotterdam-Maaskant.

Proposing van Eyck as an early form of ethnographer-architect, we would naturally picture him among the Dogon people because of his celebrated essay *A Miracle of Moderation* in Charles Jencks and George Baird's *Meaning in Architecture* (1969). However, a much closer depiction would be in the desert, as drafted by Lex Metz who was part of the team inside the car (Fig. 1). Sheltered from the irradiating sun under his pith helmet, the figure of the architect transmogrifies into a bicephalous hybrid with his camel. The desert chimera is in search of his 'Aldorado', as Metz mocks, though the city they found would prove to be less elusive than the golden legend. While this beautiful depiction is amusing, it is just the following logical step – as much as a surrealist image can have it – of Paul Klee's vision (Fig. 2): the pyramid, paradigmatic architecture of the desert, simply gets substituted by the architect as a figure emerging from the sand. While partly they were in North Africa because Klee went there in 1914 – Klee being with Joan Miró the greatest heroes of the CoBRa gang – van Eyck got in love with the landscape through the reading of Marcel Griaule. What the influence of this French ethnographer brings to us is to question whether the architect-ethnographer would actually not be a figure at all, but rather a crew; and their journey not simply a visit to the Dogon but a Mission Sahara-Rotterdam that, with an excursus to Otterlo, would connect both poles. Under this paranoid hypothesis of seeing a series of events in the '50s and early '60s as one single mission, this chapter will hope to critically address the ethnographical aspects of van Eyck and Haan's prefigurative practice.

Looking back at his engagement with Africa, van Eyck wrote his essay-missive *Ex Turico aliquid novum* [Something new from Zurich] in 1982. Playing with the Latin dictum 'ex Africa semper aliquid novum' [There is always something new coming from Africa], he recalls how he received the news from Africa when in his student years in Zurich he bought the issue number 2 of *Minotaure*, the monograph on Griaule's Mission Dakar-Djibouti⁴. There he discovered the photographs of Ogot, the

Fig. 2- Klee, Paul. *With Two Dromedaries and One Donkey*. 1914/19.
©Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art, Bernard and Cola
Heiden Collection.



Dogon village as Griaule illustrates in his *Introduction Méthodologique*⁵. Griaule's article is not only a foreword introducing the volume, but furthermore an introduction to the whole ethnographic method he used in the mission. Precisely the village of Ogol was instrumental for unfolding the procedure. As opposed to Roussel's disregard for direct experience, Griaule's ethnography based its validity in being "sur le terrain" [in the field] for direct observation of the peoples. However, being in contact did not imply being immersed; rather, the ethnographer had to maintain the due distance of his role as an observer. More precisely, in contrast to previous ethnographic studies, Griaule argued for the need of multiple standpoints for observation due to the manifold studied subjects and processes⁶. The members of the mission were in charge of bringing these points of view together, as "il est souvent difficile au même observateur tout ensemble de noter, de photographier, de cinématographier, de dessiner (...) [it is often difficult for the one single observant to, simultaneously, note down, photograph, film and draw (...)]"⁷ the same action taking place. Despite being himself an aviator, and his practice being influenced by it⁸, for Griaule the stand point of aerial vision was not enough. Even further than a bicephalous observant, as van Eyck was depicted, Griaule's method was polyecephalous – a Hydra of a sort. Nevertheless, Griaule made use of his aviator mind-frame for clarifying the method, depicting it from above. He took the funerary rite for the death of a hunter of the village of Ogol that his mission witnessed as paradigmatic case. Unfolding the strategy to be followed by the ethnographic team, Griaule shows a plan of the main square of the village where the ritual was to take place (Fig. 3). Each of the observed subjects or actors in the ceremony are indicated by hatches. In their orbit, seven target points indicate the presence of an ethnographer recording what was taking place. Of course, this constellation of observants was further aided by informants – translators, who in fact at times put at risk the validity of direct observation⁹. But this shortcoming was to be verified by *le rapport*¹⁰ in which results and findings were contrasted among observants, as well as personal views double-checked.

Van Eyck's 1951 journey was actually proposed by the Dutch architect Herman Haan, who had been travelling around North Africa since 1928 when he first went to Morocco and started maturing an obsessive interest for the ethnographic and archaeological aspects in the continent¹¹. Accompanying them were their wives, the painter Corneille, the graphic illustrator Lex Metz, Jan Rietveld – son of Gerrit Rietveld, and sharing office with van Eyck at the time –, the sculptor Louis van Roode, and Ben Deurme – the vehicle mechanic¹². The crew was obviously far from Griaule's standards, who took with him observants for totemism, religion, masks, magic, games, political organisations, nativity, marriage, mortality, techniques, linguistics, geography, anthropology, zoology, palaeontology, botanics, beaux-arts, embryology¹³... basically, any single aspect of the peoples to be found en route. In other words, a project not that far from Napoleon's *Description*, but with a mind-frame completely different vis-à-vis the native population of their times. What is interesting is that, among a long list of subjects covering masks, paintings, sacred sculptures, ornaments for the circumcised, rock art, sacrificial bulls, etc. that are discussed in the *Minotaure*, very little is said about architecture. Its role is merely recessed to the background, despite the interest of its forms that caught the imagination of the Dutch architect. What van Eyck's expedition illustrates is an attempt for bringing architecture to the fore. Whether that attempt is ethnographically valid is a different question to be argued. What, at least, he had so far was a team running southwards through the sea of sand, and a love for the background forms in *Minotaure*.

This obsession with the architecture of Ogol in the journey of 1951 has traditionally been discussed within van Eyck's interest for 'the elementary' in architecture¹⁴; but this elementariness was not that of geometrical abstraction – against which he had published an article just before departure¹⁵. Rather, the elementary was praised by its directness, by its not being mediated by Western culture. Francis Strauven – biographer of van Eyck – describes it as a question of time, "his passion for the elementary soon introduced him to go in

search of other, non-Western cultures; for places where the elementary had survived intact despite the vicissitudes of many centuries.” An elementary that would be a pre-Western other. However, for van Eyck, as for Nietzsche, the other was also a question of space, an exterior to be explored. In fact, as with the German philosopher, van Eyck’s first trip to Tunisia was unintendedly aborted by the authorities not granting permission¹⁶. However, contrary to Nietzsche, van Eyck persevered for years and managed to set off¹⁷. Once in Africa, it didn’t take him very long to realise that between one culture and its other, the desert presented a paradoxical experience of an undefined in-between. As Jan Rietveld recalled about the trip:

“The crazy thing about absolutely nothing is that you are totally surrounded by a continuous horizon, and you feel, as you ride the truck, like the compass point at the centre of a gigantic and slowly moving circle. Aldo found it oppressive. At a certain point he leapt out of the truck and walked some way of[sic] into the desert. He was trying to escape that compass point.”¹⁸

The compass experience of van Eyck in the desert brought two paradoxes he later exploited. On the one hand, the paradox of trying to break through Western culture – his quest for non-Western elementariness – and eventually experiencing oneself trapped in the centre. Despite being proposed as an exterior, his journeys were a question of the centre, of the interior, of the contemporary city. On the other hand, and in a similar vein, the paradox of being at the centre in the middle of absolutely nothing. A question that is not that far from the cartographers of the RGS’s fixation with mapping oneself. However, if the latter did cling on to the grid as base of their mapping, van Eyck’s efforts could be considered towards getting rid of one particular grid. The desert would not be anymore about grids, but about continuous circles. As he would do in the CIAM Otterlo ‘59, the all-encompassing experience of desert encircling substituted the famous *grilles* of Le Corbusier for the CIAM ‘49. The desert was about being off-the-grid of CIAM architecture.

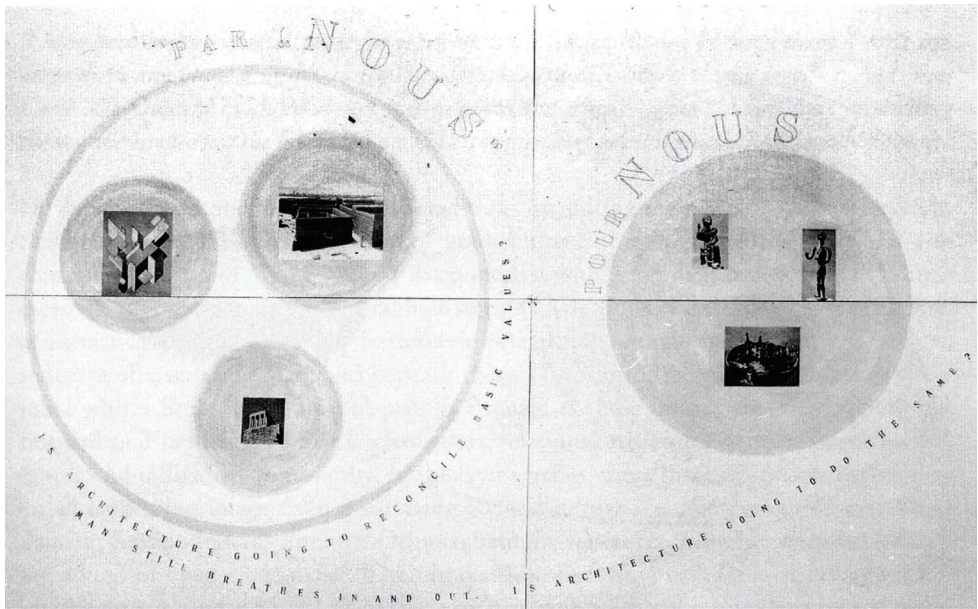
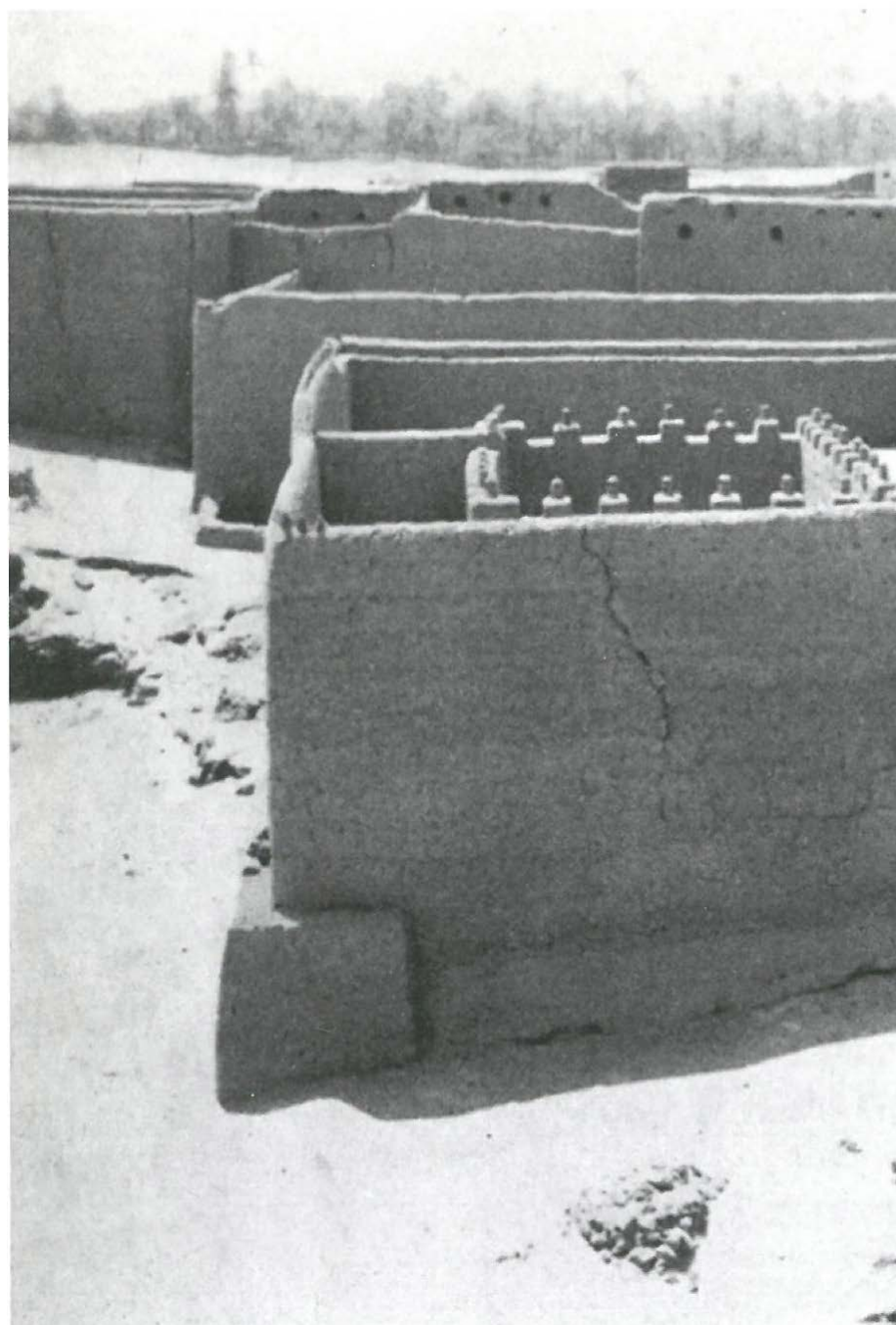
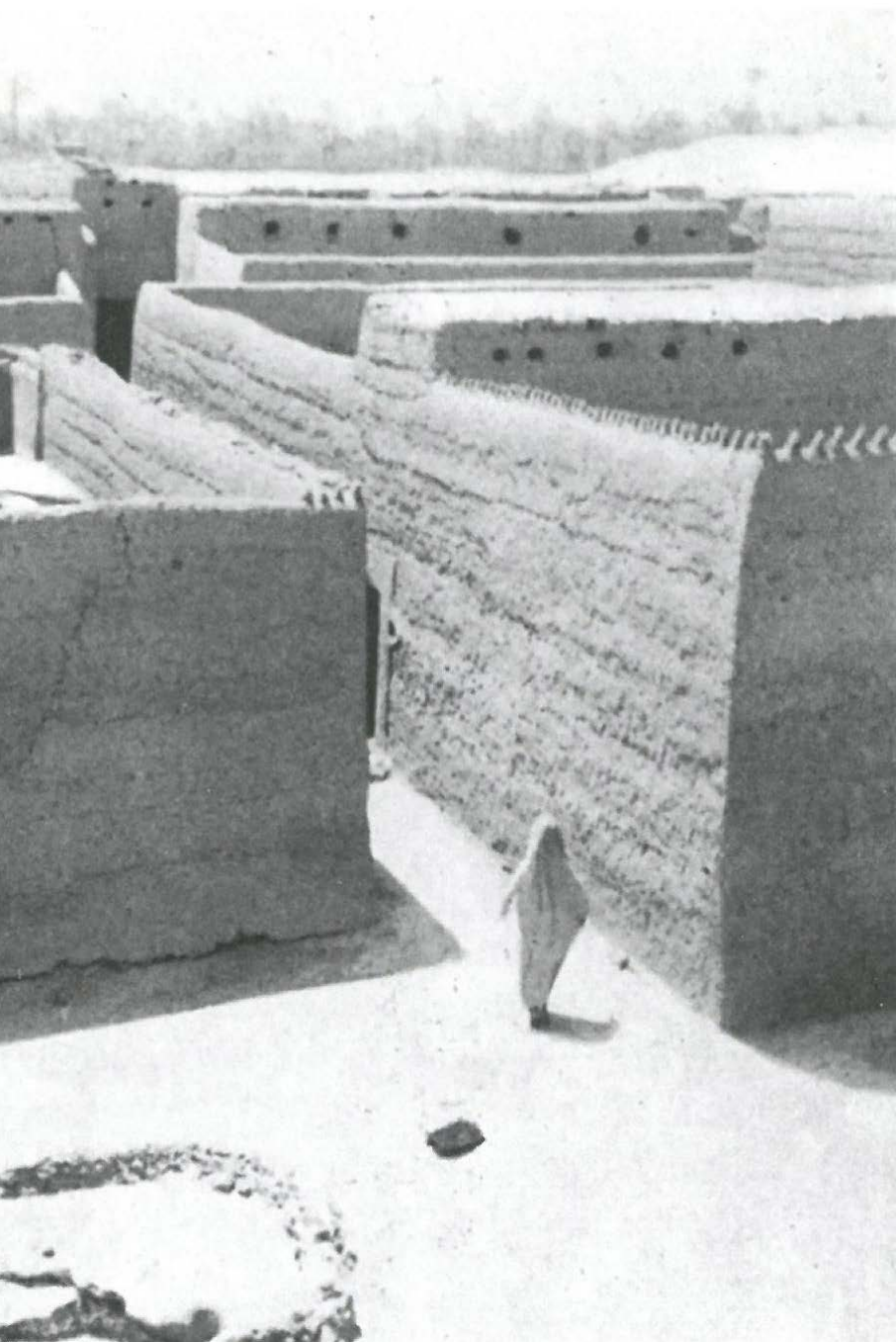


Fig. 4- Van Eyck, Aldo. Original version of *Otterlo Circles*.
1951.

[*The Ritual, Otterlo CIAM, 1959*]

The following stop in their ethnographic mission was in the middle of the Hoge Veluwe National Park, Netherlands, where the obsequies rites for CIAM, Otterlo '59, took place in the galleries of the Kröller-Müller Museum. There, van Eyck transgressed the fundamental principle of Griaule's method of not getting involved, by becoming one of the major celebrants for the ceremony. His intervention, 'Is Architecture Going to Reconcile Basic Values?', didn't fail catching the attention of the congressmen, as Louis Kahn recalled, "ma[king] a speech about the meaning of a threshold just before you enter a room"¹⁹. The audience itself was involved in the content of the speech, as in his words about thresholds they were seeing themselves. The rhetorical device was effective, as the attendees were moving from room to room of the museum. However, his threshold was not only about room-to-room liminality, but furthermore about the movement between interior and exterior, city and desert. Hanging on the wall illustrating his words was the 'Otterlo Circles'²⁰, the desert encircling experience moving away from the grid (Fig. 4). Divided in two main circumferences, the schema outlines the realms of 'par "Nous"[by us]' and 'pour "Nous"[for us]'. The smaller circle depicts three fundamental human relations – individual, family and communal. The circle on the left, backgrounded in yellow, encloses three images shadowed in rounded halos. In that cluster, the image that finds itself most at odds is precisely a photograph of a desert house in Aoulef (Algeria), taken in the 1951 journey (Fig. 5)²¹; particularly when placed besides Van Doesburg's *Maison Particulière* and the Temple of Athena Nike. And yet, the left circle engulfed the three halos of the images within. Of course, the connection was rather elusive, and he had to clarify. "The three little photographs united in the first circle are symbols not of conflicting aspects, but of partial aspects. I have been in love with all three for years, with the values divided between them. I can't separate them any more, I simply can't. They complement each other, 431





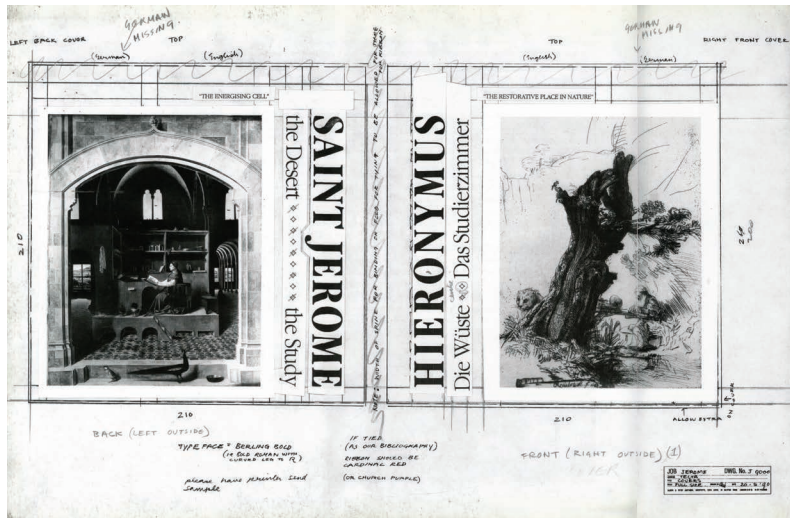


Fig. 6a- Alison and Peter Smithson, in desert costumes. 1953. CIAM IX in Smithson, Alison. 1991.

Fig. 6b- Smithson, Alison. Preparation for the cover of *Saint Jerome: the Desert...the Study*. 1990. From van den Heuvel, Dirk. *Alison and Peter Smithson: from the House of the Future to a house of today*. 2004. Rotterdam, 010 Publishers.

belong together. (...)”²² His affirmation of the three photographs belonging together was in contrast with the modern architects, who for the previous 30 years had invested themselves in what made them different, in “the technical, mechanical and, decorative level (...), been harping continually on what is different in our time to such an extent even that [they] ha[ve] lost touch with what is not different, with what is always essentially the same.”²³ After 31 years of CIAM, van Eyck’s coup de grâce was not yet another exterior – another element that was different – but rather his finding in the desert was the possibility of encircling it all in one single interior; the needed ‘New Consciousness’²⁴ was an internalising one. “That’s why I went to the Sahara, to rediscover enclosure in its archaic, absolute form.”²⁵ The stepping out to the Sahara was a first movement intending to bringing-in the finding. In Otterlo he put it in the slogan of the circles: “*Man still breathes both in and out; when is architecture going to the same? (...)* Modern architecture has been trying hard to breathe only out without breathing in (...)”²⁶ The encircling experience of the desert was the in-between diaphragm that enabled the operation of breathing in. This bringing together modern architecture and the architecture of the desert aimed at putting an end to CIAM, and, despite its exoticism of desert-lover, it resonated with other members of the Team Ten. While in the following discussion Wendell H. Lovett complained that this was not the place for “architects’ individual philosophy”, Alison Smithson promptly riposted, “Aldo is not stating his individual philosophy, he is stating our philosophy – the philosophy of the group.” Arguably she did buy into the idea, not only as a metaphorical postulation of Team Ten creed, but even to the literal level of the desert-architect-philosopher – when years later she prepared the publication of *St Jerome: the Desert...the Study* (Fig. 6), on the habitats of the hermit saint as paradigmatic working space of the architect.

What was not so agreeable in Otterlo – perhaps particularly for Alison and Peter Smithson – was Herman Haan’s intervention. First of all because his rhetoric device was not as effective as van Eyck’s *threshold*. On concluding to advocate to a return to the

(previous page)
Fig. 5- Van Eyck,
Aldo. *Cracks in
a recently built,
otherwise intact
house in Aoulef*,
1951, in Van
Eyck, Aldo.
*Bouwen in de
Zuidelijke Oasen*
[*Building in the
Southern Oases*] in
Forum. 1953.
No. 1.

E
PAOLOZZI

P
SMITHSON



A
SMITHSON

N
HENDERSON



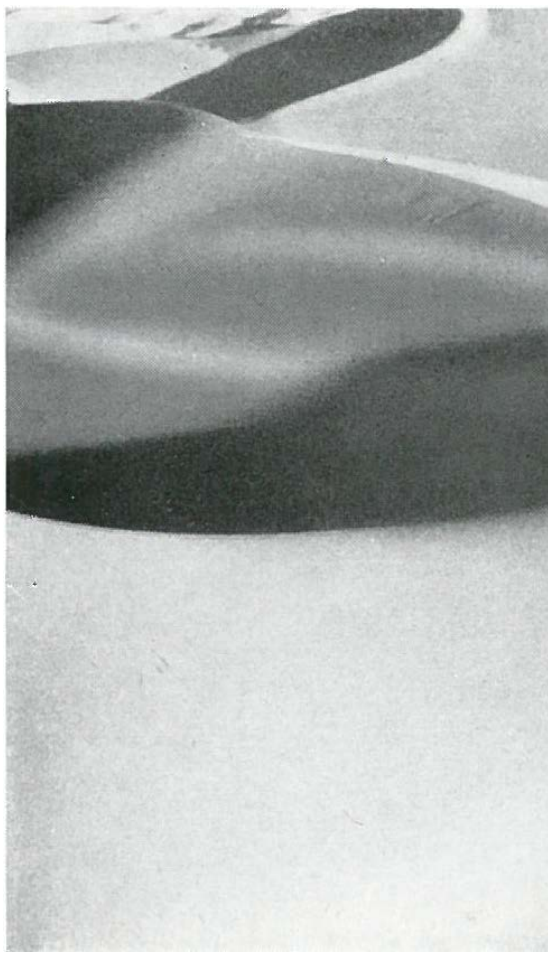
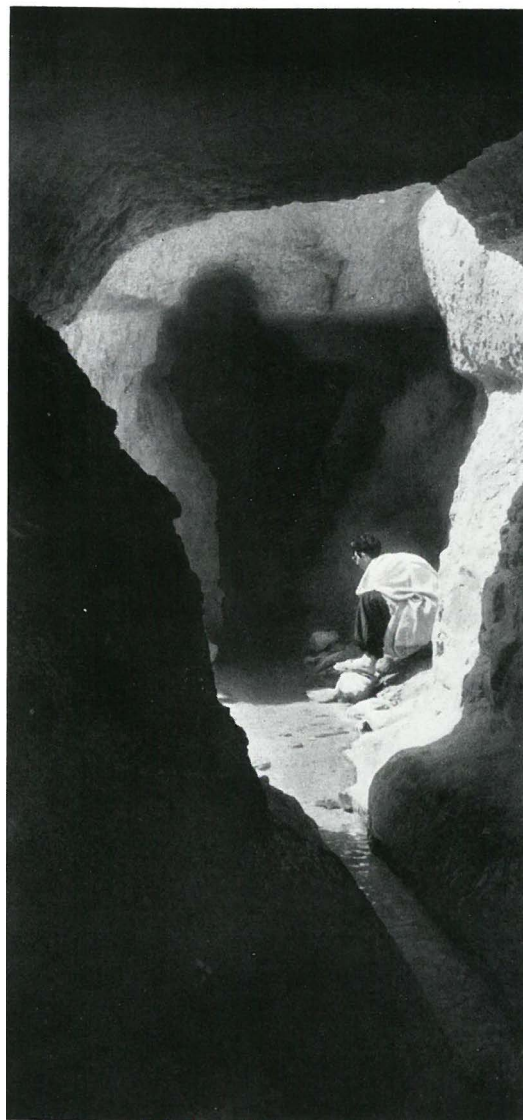




Fig. 8- *Base camp* in Piet Vollaard. *Herman Haan architect*. 1995.
Rotterdam, Uitgeverij 010. pp. 8, 9.

fundamentals of human habitation he rhetorically questioned: “[the nomads] have no chairs, but they do not need them. For you cannot sit more comfortably than on a little mat or simply on the floor, if you are used to it. Have we forgotten how? Or not yet?”²⁷ All sitting in chairs around his address, the audience remained rather cold; the Smithsons perhaps recalling their iconic portrait in Limerston Street with the chairs taking the role of paradigmatic architectural design²⁸ (Fig. 7). Despite the audience disagreeing, Haan succeeded in his iconic portrait which was to show the ergonomics of floor sitting (Fig. 8). Beside the rhetorical figures discussed above, Haan’s presentation was understandably misunderstood. This was primarily due to his decision to neglect the format arranged by the organisers – in which each participant had to present a project of his own practice “which he considered to express in the best way possible his conception of the task of the architect (...)”²⁹, focusing in his ethnographic trips, leaving his housing projects as secondary. The presentation, titled *Life in the Desert* and dealing with his journeys to the Sahara, hardly generated the urgency of architectural practice that was requested³⁰. If van Eyck’s deserts could have some echoes of the habitats presented by the Alger Group or the GAMMA Group at CIAM 9, Haan’s desert was different – if anything, it would recall Michel Ecochard’s archaeological pastime, but not his aerial documentation and urban designs. In the opening paragraph describing the desert in the kind of jargon that Robert Smithson would use in his entropic landscapes, accompanied by his no less rarefied photographs, Haan had lost the audience (Fig. 9). “Vibrations, caused by the heat during the days, shorten space until it becomes a small island. The biting cold nights make space seem infinite. These contrasts give a different aspect to the earth. Erosion on the periphery of day and night (polished after by the particles of dust swept up by the wind), create contrasts which give the earth an unrecognisable aspect.”³¹ The content was too alien for a context of architects like Louis Kahn, Kenzo Tange, Ernesto Rogers, or José Coderch that were present. So, they didn’t get much from Haan’s travelogue in search of architecture in – oasis –, on –

(previous page) Fig. 7a-
Henderson, Nigel.
Four artists included in the exhibition 'This is Tomorrow'.
(bottom), and portrait as it was shown in the catalogue of the exhibition (top).
1956 © The Estate of Nigel Henderson and The Mayor Gallery
Fig. 7b-
Henderson, Nigel.
Peter Smithson, Eduardo Paolozzi, Alison Smithson, and Nigel Henderson. 1956
© The Estate of Nigel Henderson and The Mayor Gallery



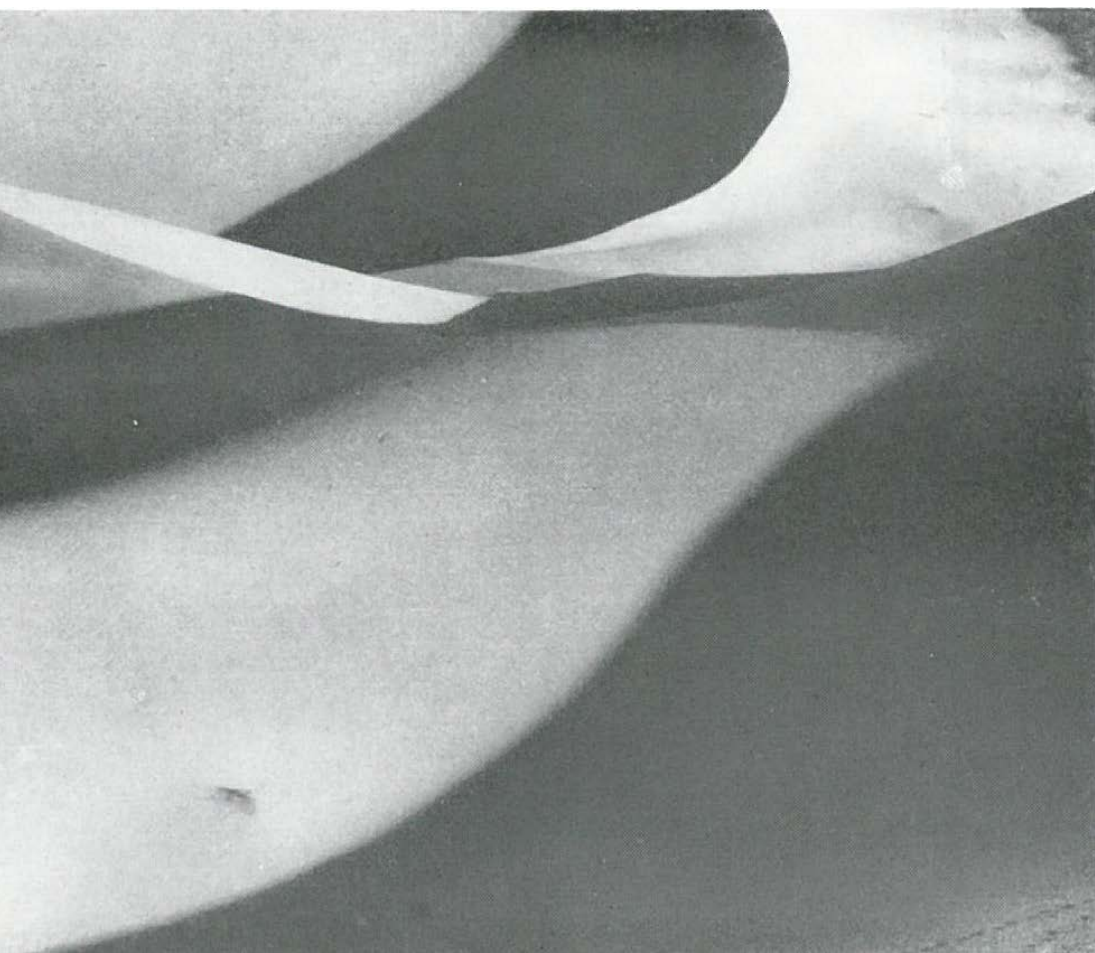




Fig 10- Herman Haan recording the sessions at CLAM '59. BAKE_f23 Nos: 35 / 90 / 92 / 132 / 24 / 172 / 146 & 124 © NAI Collection

the Matmata cave-dwellings –, above – piling ghorfas –, and roaming across – nomadic tents – the desert. Only Oscar Newman, in his review, alleged that, despite the relevance of the presentation not being obvious – to put it mildly – it could be related to the “work of people like van Eyck, Voelcker and Bakema.”³²

(previous page)
Fig. 9- Haan,
Herman. Images
in *Life in the
desert*. 1959, in
Newman, Oscar.
1961.

Nevertheless the legibility of the presentation was a secondary question. His intervention was arguably a distraction. The main purpose of his presence was ethnographic. CIAM itself was the folk to be studied. “Herman Haan (...) so zealously tape-recorded all the discussions, both during sessions and at breaks (...)”³³ was noted by Oscar Newman – archivist of the conference. In-between discussions, Haan is shown taking advantage for reloading the tape (Fig. 10a). During the sessions, the image of the architect-ethnographer in the shadow of each presenter, drawing the micro-recorder closer to his mouth. Polyecephalous and unobtrusive observation, as Griaule dictated. By the last day, everything was ready for the funerary ritual of CIAM. As Alison Smithson attempted in her writings, dating the precise time of CIAM’s demise was problematic³⁴. And with her, I’m not arguing that CIAM was over because of the events that took place during CIAM ’59. The history of the end of CIAM is a much more complex one³⁵. I rather argue for the hypothesis of seeing certain actions of CIAM ’59 as the burial of CIAM, a funerary ritual to be studied ethnographically. Its death was undated; however, the hour of its exequies was pretty much established by the ritual. CIAM ’59 was already too late for pondering the question. “The problem (...) is not whether or not CIAM is to live or to die, (...) it has been dead for some time”³⁶, as Giancarlo di Carlo put it in his presentation. Despite this, another Italian, Ernesto Rogers, resisted letting it go, claiming for the need of CIAM’s continuity, and looking at the context of the conference he pondered that “museums are architectonic organisms for the conservation of the documents of historic experience, not things which are dead forever (...)”³⁷ For the particular museum where the conference was taking place, this was not the case. Henry van de Velde’s Kröller-Müller museum at Otterlo was eventually not the place









(previous page) Fig. 11- Helene Kröller-Müller laid out in the [Kröller-Müller] Rijksmuseum. 1939. ©Kröller-Müller Museum

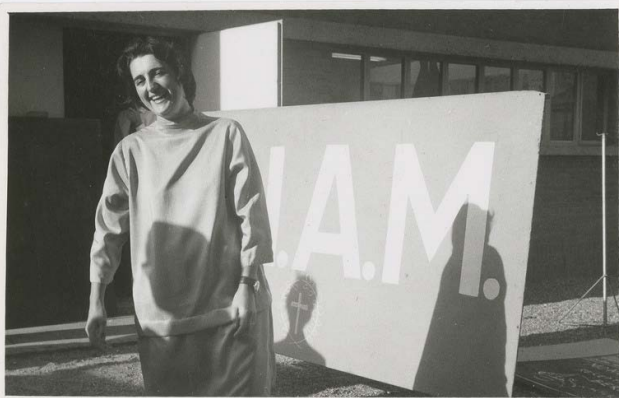
for perpetuation but a place for mourning the CIAM. It was not the first time. Already the wake for the late Helene Kröller-Müller took place within its galleries (Fig. 11). For CIAM's time, the venue of the ceremony was the back exit of van Der Velde's museum. Jaap Bakema's video documentary opens with the acronym of the group wreathed with a laureated Holy Cross in the form of large memorial plaque³⁸,³⁹. Preceded by a solemn procession, the camera closes-up over the plaque in which the shadows of the participants are cast. They are projecting their outstretched arms to the sky, entangling them with the movements of their funeral dance (Fig. 12). The officiants were Aldo van Eyck, Jaap Bakema, Sandy and Blanche Lemco van Ginkel, John Voelcker, Georges Candilis and Alison and Peter Smithson⁴⁰; together performing a semi-elementary dance. The fascination with the post-mortem ceremonies that so thoroughly were described by Michel Leiris and intrigued van Eyck, were transposed from the Ogol to Otterlo. Now the images were not of tribal characters hidden behind a mask, but rather Alison and Peter Smithson, van Eyck and Bakema, fully suited struggling to perform unsophisticated movements with their arms up and down (Fig. 13). A strange architectural liturgy for the deceased group. Nevertheless, the Team Ten would remain as sorts of tribal encounters, or at least as less formal meetings than the CIAM⁴¹. The ceremony was further immortalised with the photo of concelebrants surrounding the plaque (Fig. 14) – diligently mailed to the editors of the Architectural Review, that published it, entitling it, *Resurrection Move Fails at Otterlo*⁴². Yet, it was not as much about resurrection as about burying CIAM's corpse.

The non-ethnographic official conclusion of the conference was milder. It happened in the concluding session in which Jaap Bakema stated that "it was (...) decided that the name CIAM could no more be used by the participants."⁴³ They simply decided to drop the name⁴⁴. The official death was more formal, though less ceremonial than the staging by van Eyck and companions.

(facing page) Fig. 12a- Bakema, Jaap. 'Death of CIAM' as Staged by Team 10. 1959. ©Het Nieuwe Instituut

(across) Fig. 12b- 'The Death of CIAM', stills from the 16mm film by Jaap Bakema from Van den Heuvel, Dirk(ed.) et al. Jaap Bakema and the Open Society. 2018. Amsterdam, Archis Publishers. p. 16

(following page) Fig. 13- 'Death of CIAM' as Staged by Team 10. 1959. TTEN_f8 Nos: 1a / 2 / 5 / 6 & 9. Team 10 Archives ©Het Nieuwe Instituut









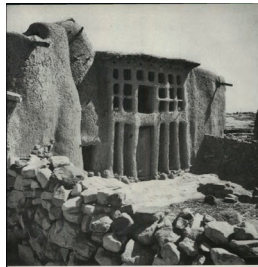
[*The City, Dogon, 1960*]

Van Eyck's message from the Dogon was received with distortion by the architectural community in the 1970's. As Haan's in Otterlo, van Eyck's essay on his journey to the people of then French Sudan in the 1960 was hardly understood – or altogether misunderstood – following its publication within Charles Jencks and George Baird's *Meaning in Architecture* (1969). The meaningfulness of van Eyck's writing was seen either leaning towards semiology or towards the psychological aspects of Baird's *La Dimension Amoureuse*⁴⁵. Neither of those were the context in which van Eyck aimed his travelogue to be placed in. Nor was it the context of a different discussion in which it was framed, within the increasing research on vernacular architecture following the 1964 publication of Bernard Rudofsky's catalogue for the show at MoMA, *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-pedigreed Architecture*⁴⁶. Although, some of the illustrations in both essays were very similar – more specifically Rudofsky showed some images of the Dogon villages borrowed from Marcel Griuale's collection – nevertheless in van Eyck's the question of the architect was a central one, with or without the architecture he found in the Dogon people. The ethnological aspects had something to say to the architect beyond the semiological, psychological or vernacular readings. Even though the essay on the Dogon, titled *Dogon*, was published first as a short Dutch version in *Forum*, in July 1967, a full English version in the University of Pennsylvania's magazine *Via* in 1968 and, finally, a year later within *Meaning in Architecture*, van Eyck's actual journeys to the Dogon took place much earlier, between February and March, 1960⁴⁷. During these journeys in the early '60s, he had with him a set of questions more related to what he had discussed in Otterlo than to any late 1960s architectural conversation. In fact, what he witnessed in the African villages supposed the shock of beholding that the questions he was posing in Otterlo were coming to a striking solution in the Dogon architecture. It was still a quest for solving

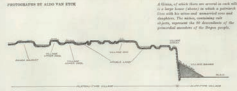
the dichotomy between ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’. Van Eyck’s intuition that architecture could overcome the duality was seen in the Dogon’s conception of the house. The house plays a central role in their understanding of the world. Francis Strauven put van Eyck’s findings the following way. In the Dogon cosmology, the world is a structure of interlocked analogous organisms conceived in the image of man⁴⁸. The revelatory aspect for van Eyck was seeing that the house was identified with man, giving a coherence to the entire world within it. An idea that he witnessed in his journey, but that he also found in the writings of Griaule. In *A Miracle of Moderation*, van Eyck emphasised that by the identification of house and world in the image of man, the Dogon “made the world system graspable, they brought the universe within their measurable confines; they made the world a habitable place, they brought what was ‘outside’, ‘inside’”⁴⁹. Without entering in depth in the very complicated system of Dogon cosmological views, what is interesting in van Eyck’s essay is that he was also moving in a process of bringing in the outside, but in this case it was a matter of his journeys to the ‘exterior’ internalising the Dogon concept of ‘outside brought in’ within the modern discourse.

However, there was much more about the journey to the Dogon. Prior to the essay with which van Eyck introduced the Dogon into the architectural debate, he had published a short and discreet article in *Architectural Forum*, in the issue of September 1961. That article misses the ethnographic insights included in *A Miracle of Moderation* with the essays by ethno-psychoanalysts Paul Parin and Fritz Morgenthau – that van Eyck had met living with the Dogon during his trip. Nevertheless, the article in *Architectural Forum* already sketched his intuitions of the relevance of architecture in the life of the Dogon. For it, he highlighted that “[t]he specific way the Dogon people build their houses, granaries and villages collectively (...) reflects the truly wonderful spiritual equipoise which they have attained in every way. Individual and collective activities and material and spiritual functions interact so harmoniously, so graciously, that anthropologists can offer no existing parallels.”⁵⁰ A vision that finds its paradigmatic form in

(previous page)
Fig. 14- Haan,
Herman[possible
author]. “*The Death
of CLAM*” at the
last CLAM meeting,
Otterlo, Holland.
Peter Smithson,
Alison Smithson,
John Voelcker, Jaap
Bakema, Sandy
van Ginkel; Aldo
van Eyck and
Blanche Lemco.
1959



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM FRED STEIN



CULTURE

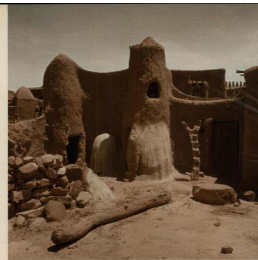
Architecture of the Dogon



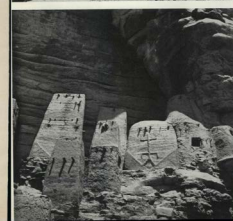
At a long bend of the Niger River in Northwestern Africa, in the rocky heart of a plateau, where the terrain has formed a basin and the Niger River flows, is one of the most ancient and complete civilizations of the continent. The Dogon people, who have lived in this region for centuries, are one of the most ancient peoples of Africa. They have built a series of small, round, mud-brick houses with flat roofs, which are built into the cliffs of the plateau. These houses are built in a series of terraces, one above the other, and are built in a way that they are built into the cliffs of the plateau. The houses are built in a way that they are built into the cliffs of the plateau. The houses are built in a way that they are built into the cliffs of the plateau.

Since 1931, the Dogon have been known to the world. In 1931, a small group of explorers, who were looking for a new route to the interior of Africa, discovered the Dogon. They found a series of small, round, mud-brick houses with flat roofs, which were built into the cliffs of the plateau. The houses were built in a way that they were built into the cliffs of the plateau. The houses were built in a way that they were built into the cliffs of the plateau.

Black and white photograph of a Dogon village, showing the traditional mud-brick houses built into the cliffs of the plateau.



This structure, which is built in the heart of the plateau, is one of the most ancient and complete civilizations of the continent. The Dogon people, who have lived in this region for centuries, are one of the most ancient peoples of Africa. They have built a series of small, round, mud-brick houses with flat roofs, which are built into the cliffs of the plateau. These houses are built in a series of terraces, one above the other, and are built in a way that they are built into the cliffs of the plateau. The houses are built in a way that they are built into the cliffs of the plateau.



This structure, which is built in the heart of the plateau, is one of the most ancient and complete civilizations of the continent. The Dogon people, who have lived in this region for centuries, are one of the most ancient peoples of Africa. They have built a series of small, round, mud-brick houses with flat roofs, which are built into the cliffs of the plateau. These houses are built in a series of terraces, one above the other, and are built in a way that they are built into the cliffs of the plateau. The houses are built in a way that they are built into the cliffs of the plateau.



the Dama, the masks-dance that puts end to a period of mourning. It consisted of a ritual during which the entire village was involved, transforming the very built environment. “The entire village all at once forms the stage for a highly complex ritual lasting several days and nights, in which each inhabitant participates in one way or another. A miracle of urban choreography!”⁵¹ Although he seems to have been present in the actual rite – as he affirms in the opening of *A Miracle of Moderation* – his own photographs that illustrate the article do show the architecture, but not under any miraculous choreography (Fig. 15). Interestingly, contrary to the images of Griaule – that, in fact, led van Eyck to the village – which emphasise the rituals (that Griaule had described in *Minotaure*), van Eyck’s images *focus* only at the buildings that previously had been merely background props; avoiding entirely the depiction of people and therefore their rituals.

Nevertheless, Herman Haan, who was also accompanying him in the journey⁵², tried a less literal conjunction between architecture and ethnology. His attempt is a photo-essay, titled *The House is the Belly of the Mother*, unfolding his own photographs with the short fragmented paragraphs that mix his explanations and the mythological justifications given by the Dogon people (Fig. 16). “[T]hen comes the day of the ‘dama’/and the masks come out of the secret caves/and dance a wild dance/ to save the nyama of the dead/against the other nyamas/and to bring him to the world of his ancestors.”⁵³ But rather than focusing on the buildings themselves, his remark is towards the role of the mask ‘sirige’ – “the mask of ‘the’ house”⁵⁴ – within the Dama. It was the magnificent twenty to twenty-five feet tall mask that in the rite represents the house of the eighty original ancestors of humanity (Fig. 17a). Michel Leiris had already shown its role in one of his essays for issue 2 of *Minotaure*, illustrating it with an eerie photograph of its display in the *Musée d’ethnographie*, laying on the floor, waiting to be installed for exhibition (Fig. 17b). From then on, if van Eyck observed the built structures of the Dogon, Herman Haan’s further interest could be read as an obsession with the mythopoesis of their architecture, quite literally with the myth and its origin.

(facing page)
Fig. 15- Van
Eyck, Aldo.
*Architecture of
the Dogon* in
*Architectural
Forum*. Sept.
1961. Vol. 115.
No. 5. pp. 116-
121.

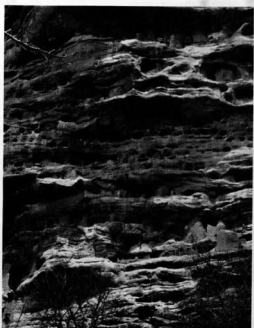
THE DESIGN AND THE TELLER

HERMAN HAAS

129 THE HOUSE IS THE BELLY OF THE MOTHER

On the southern border of the Sahara Desert some 300 miles south of Addis Ababa lies the far African village of Tadmakert. The eastern end of this rocky plateau shows some 2000 years of rock art, including high cliffs more than 100 miles long in a barren hot country.

Looking on from below the rock is densely perforated with caves often forming horizontal galleries. The rock itself is decorated geometric forms in many of which some both colored and uncolored. You look you will find them near the top near the top.

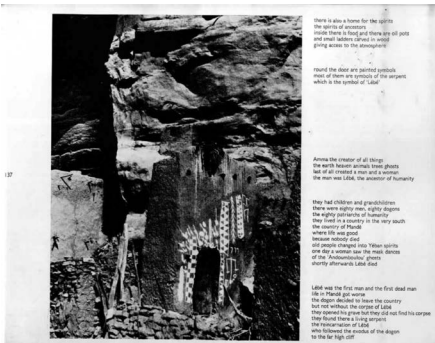
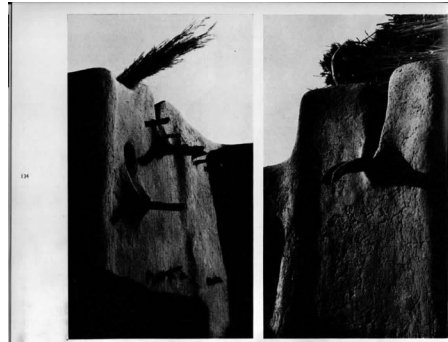
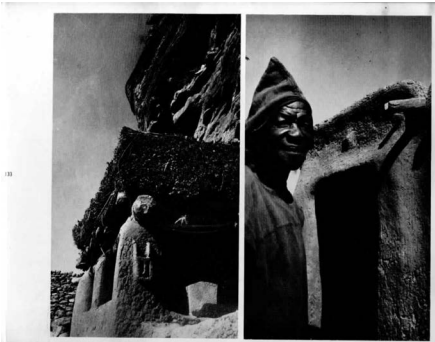
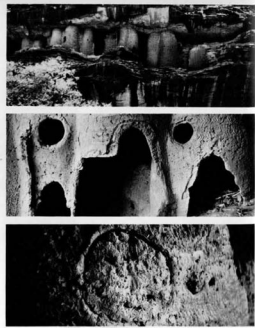


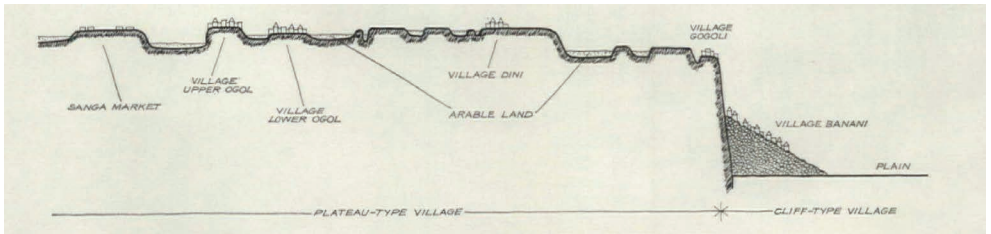
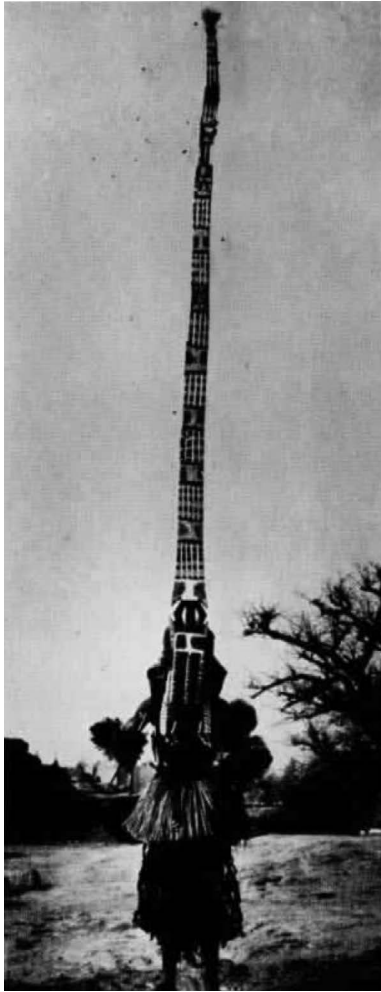
These caves are known to the tribes as the 'Holes' and are very old.

In the beginning of the world the first people who lived in the earth were the 'Holes' and they were the first to make the first tools. They were the first to make the first tools and they were the first to make the first tools.

These 'Holes' are known to the tribes as the 'Holes' and are very old. They were the first to make the first tools and they were the first to make the first tools.

These 'Holes' are known to the tribes as the 'Holes' and are very old. They were the first to make the first tools and they were the first to make the first tools.





In this sense, Haan's most relevant work in the Dogon region would be his research on Tellem⁵⁵. As he explained in *The House is the Belly of the Mother*, for the Dogon mythology,

“in the beginning of the world
the soil belonged to the yeban spirits
who live in the earth
small people with big heads and red hair
normal men can't see them
the yeban taught the tellem
how to build a house
preparing clay and then making bricks and
throwing a rope in the air
they strapped up the bricks
and they climbed and clambered as termites do
along the ropes to the caves.”⁵⁶

A narrative of the origins of architecture clearly not in Laugier's fashion, slightly more of a Semperian vein in its non-classicising technique-based take, but in any case, an intriguing explanation of the built structures, well-beyond any Surrealist justification the readers of *Minotaure* could have given. Through this question of the origin Haan embarked for the next decade in an ethnographic and archaeological project that he called *Mission Tellem*⁵⁷. The Tellem, as the myth goes, were not part of the Dogon. Rather, they preceded them as inhabitants of the region. The Dogon simply found them when they migrated northwards from the paradisiacal land of Mandé sometime in the fifteen century AD⁵⁸. The remains of their architecture are not to be found in the villages of the Dogon, but in the cavities of an impressive cliff – in some parts rising more than 300 meters – that crosses the entire region. Van Eyck had already pointed at the section of the territory, but only to remark the difference between the plateau-type villages – located on top – and what he calls the ‘cliff-type villages’ – which are not built in the cliff, but at its feet (Fig. 18). Haan, though, did focus in the architecture of the ridge. For this, he returned in other five research trips between 1964 and 1971 in cooperation with Leiden University, these times without van Eyck⁵⁹. In the archives of the Het

(previous page)
Fig. 16- Haan,
Herman. *The
House is the Belly
of the Mother*
in *Architects'*
Year Book.
1965.

(facing page)
Fig. 17a- Haan,
Herman. ‘*Sirige*’
as shown in *The
House is the Belly
of the Mother*
in *Architects'*
Year Book.
1965.

Fig. 17b- ‘*Les
Mères des
Masques*’
Dogon... in Leiris,
Michel. *Objets
Rituels Dogon* in
Minotaure. 1933.
Vol. 2.

Fig. 18- Van
Eyck, Aldo.
*Section of the
Dogon territory* in
Sept. 1961. Vol.
115. No. 5. p.
116.







Fig. 20a- Kees van Langeraad interviewing Herman Haan. 1964.
©ANP Historisch Archief.

Fig. 20b- The expedition team setting off from Rotterdam on January, 7 1964. From left: Kees van Langeraad, Didier Koekenberg (?), Jacques Groeneveld, René Wassing, Herman Haan, Hansje Fischer-Haan, (unidentified), Violette Cornelius, Jan Rietveld. Note van Langeraad's microphone, and the parts of the aluminum capsule on the roof carrier of the Land Rover; from Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 174.

Nieuwe Instituut there's an undated model of a fragment of the cliff, attributed to Herman Haan (Fig. 19). At first sight it resembles an ant farm, and beyond being just an architectural model, it somehow embodies the Dogon mythology. "[T]hey strapped up the bricks/and they climbed and clambered as termites do."⁶⁰ Though this could be taken as anecdotal coincidence of the shift of scales in the architect's method and the shift of scales in the myth, Haan did incorporate some elements of Dogon's beliefs into his own practice.

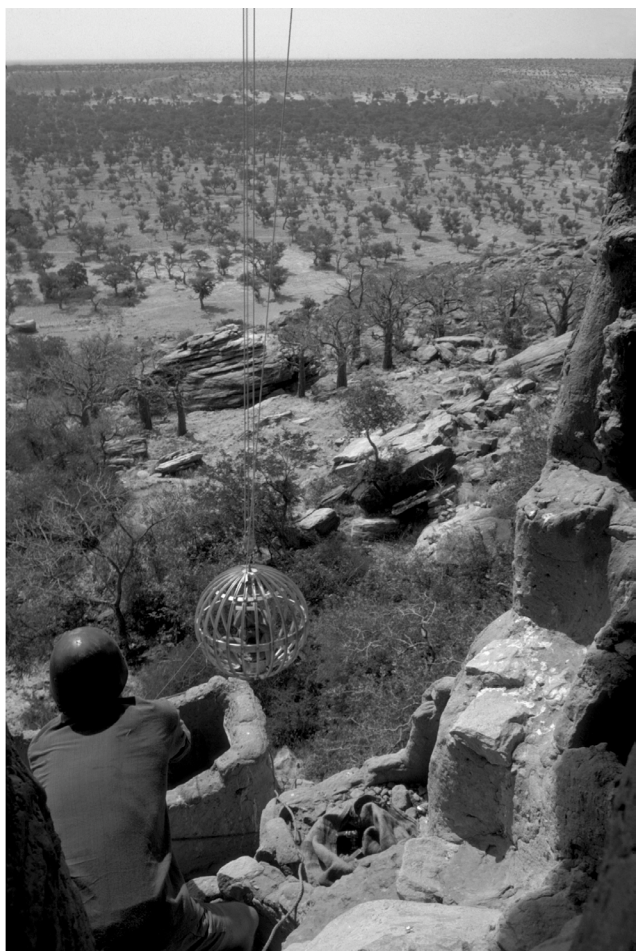
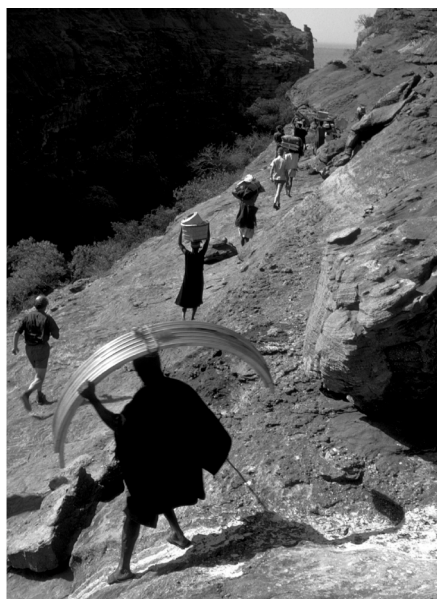
On January 7th, 1964, Haan with part of his crew were interviewed by Kees van Langeraad, of TV channel NCRV (Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging), just as they were departing (Fig. 20). Next to them, the loaded Land Rover was carrying the aluminium pieces of Haan's invention: a spheric capsule that allowed the crew accessing caves of the cliff that had been left uninhabited for centuries (Fig. 21). Suspended between top and bottom of the cliff, the device would enable moving vertically and sidewise, making of Haan a Tellem-termite of a sort (Fig. 22). Custom-designed to be assembled on site, he produced a system fabricated "to the highest possible standards."⁶¹ An industrially-produced-mythologically-ideated system to discover the inaccessible architecture. Depicting their departure, however, the interviewer – van Langeraad – was not to remain in Rotterdam, as he was himself a significant member of the ethnographic crew. Herman Haan – securing economic support from the broadcasting channel – had arranged the expedition to be broadcasted (semi) live back in the Netherlands. The editor and a cameraman were to follow them, reporting every two weeks, being broadcasted in the national television⁶².

The documentaries gave a vivid sense of the research being carried out: from the arduous journey through the desert, to the setting up of the camp, from the assembling of the capsule, to the accessing of the cliff and archaeological and ethnological practices (Fig. 23); the expedition was a media success⁶³. Despite the above, the project was exposed to ethnographic criticism. Looking back to it, Alain Gally, anthropologist involved in the research, pointed out an amount of

(previous page)
Fig. 19- Haan,
Herman. *Rotswand,
Zuidelijke Mali [Rock
Wall, Southern Mali]*.
Undated. 410x565x55
mm. Ref. MAQV599.
©Het Nieuwe
Instituut

(following page)
Fig. 21- Transport,
assemblage and
lifting of Haan's
capsule.
a. in Jaschke, Karin.
2012. p. 137.
b. from *Tellem*,
1975 colour
documentary.
c. in Jaschke, Karin.
2012. p. 148.

Fig. 22- Haan,
Herman. *Rope
system for lifting
capsule* in Haan,
Herman. *Tellem:
Verkenning van een
oude Afrikaanse cultuur*.
1964. Rotterdam,
Museum voor Land-
en Volkenkunde;
Utrecht, Antropo-
biologisch Instituut
der Rijksuniversiteit.
Unnumbered
page.



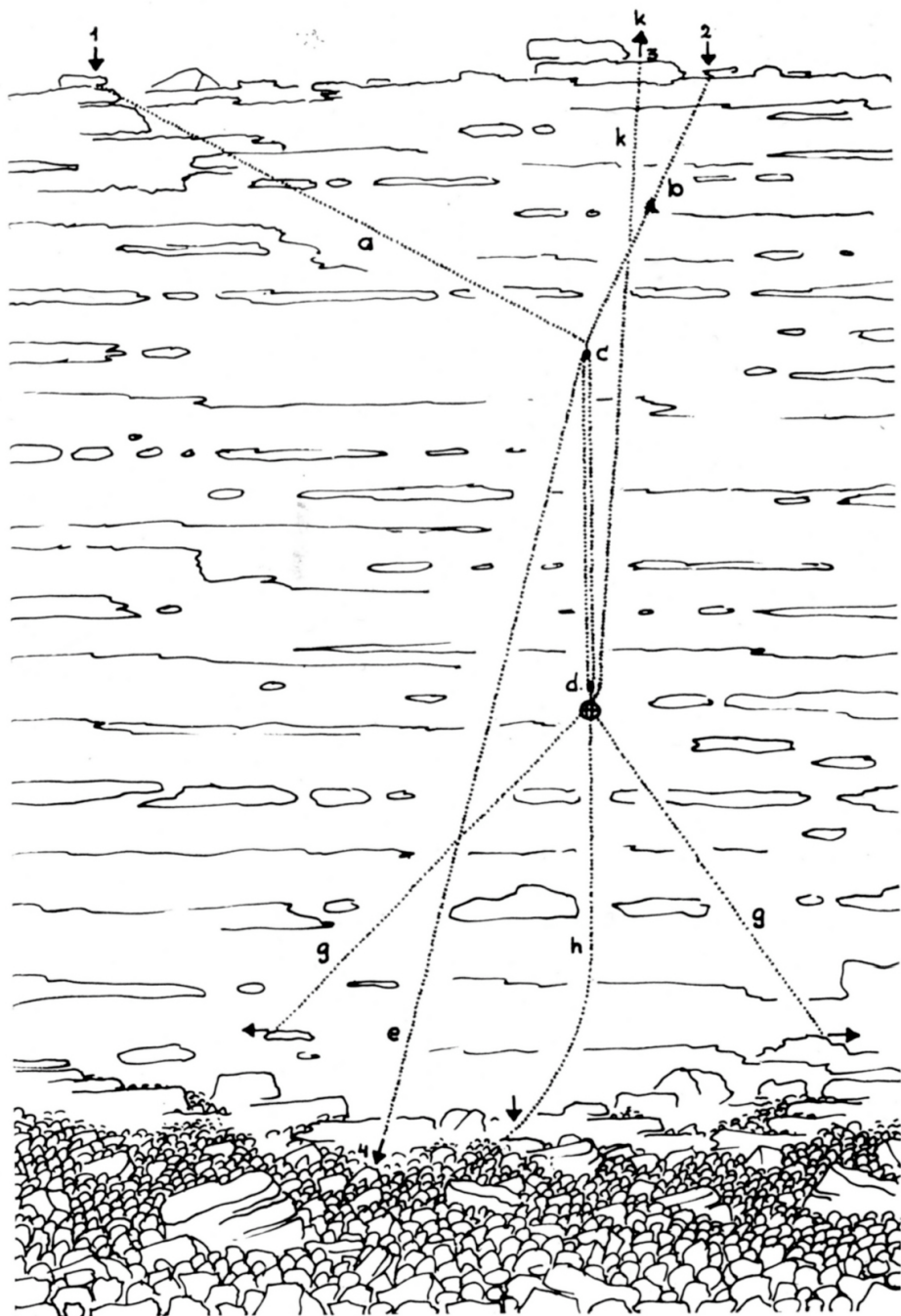








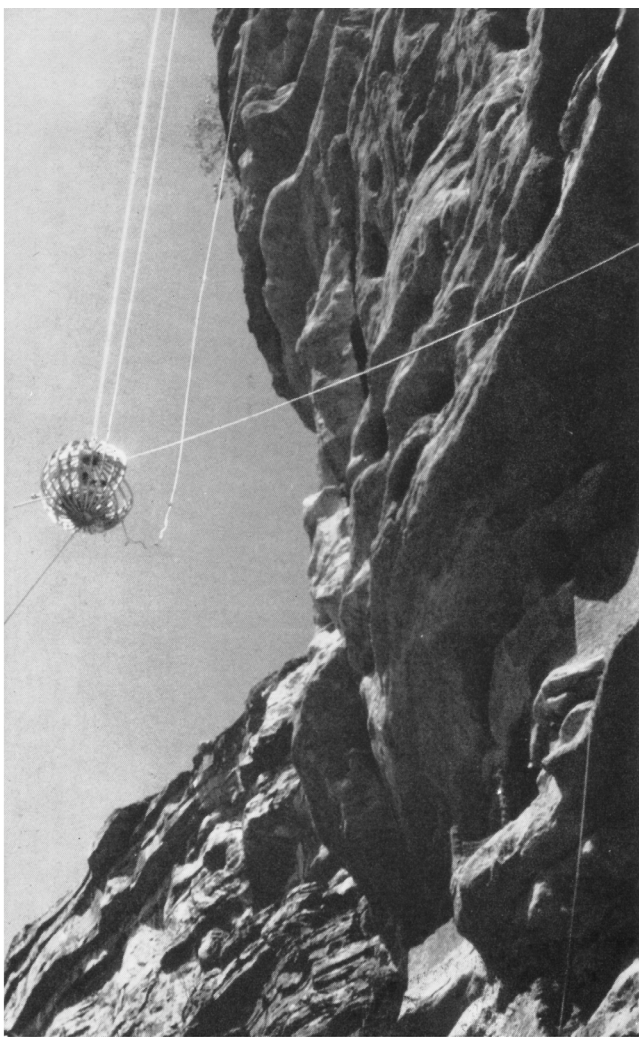
Fig. 24- Rouch, Jean. *Cimetières dans la Falaise*. 1950.

critical points; the broadcasting being one of the minor issues. “Only Mr. Haan is an archeologist (...), too much emphasis on the media side of things (...), [t]oo great a dispersal of efforts, one cannot do archaeology, ethnology, anthropology, etc. at the same time (...)”, the lack of “a team of experienced mountaineers with good equipment”, etc.⁶⁴ To this critique from a scientific standpoint, further post-colonial issues could be added. One of them was a line with which Dr. Karin Jaschke comprehensively reviewed the expeditions. Her point is that the southward travelling to Africa corresponded to a northward movement of material – not only of found archaeological items, but furthermore of imagery. Through the almost-live coverage, Haan was feeding an audience following the “mysteries of the Tellem”⁶⁵ – as they were named in the media. The images generated through this ‘northward’ media movement were not that much ethnographical and archaeological, but rather saturated with pathos and awe-inspiring moments. They were dealing, in Jaschke’s argument, not with a Tellem mythology, but with the Haan’s mythology in a Barthian sense⁶⁶.

However, this northwards vector is worth being considered within a movement operating already in ethnography, which would be symbolised in a further southwards movement, the ethnographer plunging more and more into the otherness. This can be apparent by looking at the positions of van Eyck and Haan. In theoretical bases, van Eyck was supporter of a non-intrusive form of observation, or at least to be the least intrusive possible⁶⁷. As Hannie van Eyck recalled, “we promised Parin that we would not take anything that had any significance for those people. We bought one of those pots that they use for everyday things, but nothing of any special interest because if you did that, and it was discovered who gave it to you, that person would have been excommunicated.”⁶⁸ This followed, to a certain degree, not only the recommendation of Parin, but even more a post-Griaule frame of mind – conscious of the Dakar-Djibouti mission, criticising their having gathered a vast number of objects to be sent to Paris. While this position aimed at scientific validity, it maintained a split Westerner-observing / a non-Westerner – where exoticism was

(previous page)
 Fig. 23- Haan,
 Herman. *Tellem*
programme for NCRV
(Nederlandse Christelijke
Radio Vereniging).
 1964.





the bases of Haan's media success in Jaschke's argument. However, another post-Griaule form of ethnology also started emerging in the late-50s-early-60s, influenced by Surrealism. French film-maker Jean Rouch was a disciple of Griaule, however, his work addressed critically the non-intrusive prerogative of his mentor. He had been working in Africa since the early '40s, documenting ethnographic research as a cameraman. His change of perspective came upon realising how, precisely because of the presence of his camera, his role in the ethnographical research was distorting in Griaule's terms. As he put the idea of a detached camera-observer, "'Candid camera' is disgusting,"⁶⁹ His argument is that the illusion of 'detachment' of the observer had perpetuated the "otherness" of the subject. He started developing what he termed *ethnofiction*⁷⁰, in a series of documentaries in which the camera drifts alongside the subjects within their action, not being distant but immersed in the events. Starting his experimentation in 1955 with *Les Maîtres fous*, his most recognised work, *Moi, un noir*, came out in 1957 as a different take on ethnographic complex narratives of life in Africa. Finally, later on in his life, with *Le Dama d'Ambara* (1974) he brought the circle closed. As a point of departure for the ethnofictional documentary he took the very descriptions of the Dama ceremony by Marcel Griaule and read them over his own shots of the ceremony of the Dogon – camera in hand, moving around the action. The result is a complex overlapping of two ways of observation: a distant non-intrusive Griaulian narrative and an immersive graphic record. Herman Haan later on in his life quoted Rouch, and he might have known his work in the Rotterdam museum's filmothek by the time of the Tellem expeditions⁷¹. This is possible, being the only known film of the Dogon cliff by the time of Haan's shooting there. Rouch's *Cimetière dans la Falaise* (1950) documents the funerary rituals for a deceased member of the tribe (Fig. 24). The ceremony culminates with the lifting up of the corpse to its resting place in the caves of the cliff (Fig. 25a). In Haan's case there is no Dama, no Dogon ceremony involved. Rather, it is his own lifting up to the burial wall that becomes the centre of the documentary (Fig. 25b). While

the object of the TV programme is the archaeological research, Haan becomes the subject under-scrutiny from the audience. The shots of his ascension into the cave evoke Rouch's early documentary, while his casual shots from within the capsule recall Rouch's ethnofiction (Fig.25c). Haan is the object of the mythology, embedding himself the condition of this subject and the narrative of the assumption of the corpse. However, that mythology would belong to a surrealist ethnofiction – rather than a media-based *à la* Barthes – getting himself immersed in the mythopoesis of the Dogon.

Van Eyck's and Haan's fascination for the Dogon was similar, yet their approach was worlds apart. Hannie van Eyck – in a similar way as Alison Smithson not getting the joke of sitting on the floor – recalled,

“Haan had a different approach to the local people. He wanted to be the same as them. But this doesn't work, they will not understand and just ask, ‘Why are you sleeping on the floor, when you can have a stretcher?’ This attitude is beyond them, and we didn't like it either. Haan had the idea that he ought to do what they did, that he had to behave like them, but that is not the way to discover how people really are. They just think ‘What a strange thing – why is he acting like this?’”⁷²

As opposed to Aldo van Eyck's non-intrusion, Herman Haan searched for an identification with the subject. Something that he took even to express his desire to die among the Dogon⁷³. A desire he didn't fulfil. However, the Dogon did hold a tribute to Haan, in the form of a symbolic funeral with a dummy made of straw lifted to necropolis of the cliff. A conclusion to which the aluminium-capsule ascension was only a prefiguration. An altar is dedicated to his memory, with annual sacrifices being offered for Haan⁷⁴. The introduction of the observer as subject, parallels, to a certain degree, Michel Leiris' ethnographical writing as diary. Though a different technology of vision – Leiris using the diary, Haan and Rouch documentary – they suggest a form of

(previous page) Fig. 25a- Rouch, Jean. *Cimitières dans la Falaise*. 1950.

Fig. 25b- Cornelius, Violette. *Aluminium capsule* in Haan, Herman. *Tellem: Verkenning van een oude afrikaanse cultuur*. Zeist: W. de Haan, 1965,

Fig. 25c- Haan inside the capsule and shots from inside in *Tellem*, 1975 colour documentary.



Fig. 26- Haan, Herman. *Tellem programme* for NCRV (Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging). 1964.

ethnography that works by immersion. Leris' *intimations* and Rouch's *ethnofiction* can be argued as attempts to overcoming the difference between me and the other. However, this way of immersion is subtly complicated by the practice of Haan, who operates a form of *internalisation*. As Lydia Davis claimed about Griaule's companion, "[t]aking himself as subject, with a sort of ethnographic objectivity, (...) [Leiris] examines what is familiar, to him and often to us, so closely and from such an odd angle that in the end it becomes strange, an exotic close to home."⁷⁵ In the case of Haan it is the reverse. By making himself the object of the ethnographic-architectural research – by immersing himself in the myth – it is the exotic, the distant other that is in a continuum with the self, bringing it close to home.

[The Interior, Rotterdam, 1964]

The final stop of the mission was in Haan's home, an interior that was key for his ethnographic-architectural practice. In the opening of the NCRV broadcast, Haan is shown in the lounge of his house, preparing the plans for the expedition. Taken from behind the sculpture-like fireplace, boards of a panoramic reproduction of the Dogon cliff are spread on the floor of the living-room. Haan takes measures and calculates the length of the needed rope. Sitting on the floor, his coffee table becomes a drawing board on which he traces the capsule (Fig. 26). Not that far from Maxime du Camp's bureau. However, if the Frenchman conceived the device as an alternative to the space of the revolution of his contemporary Paris, in Herman Haan's case the whole display seems a bit ambiguous. In front of the table a large openable set of glass doors is very much a post-war mainstream form of modern architecture, not a straightforward alternative to it. In fact, for the audience abroad Haan was known for his modern houses, published in architectural journals⁷⁶ (Fig. 27). There was a sort of double-game between the ethnographer risking his life broadcasting 475

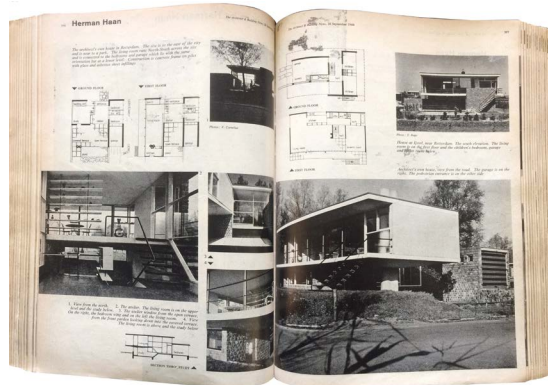
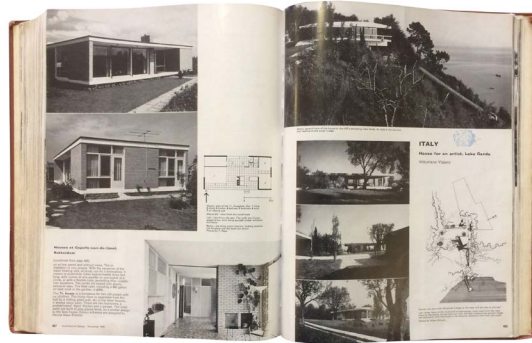


Fig. 27- Herman Haan Houses published in
 a. *Architectural Design*. 1959 Nov. p. 457
 b. *The Architect and Building News*. 1960 Sept 28. pp. 396-397
 c. *International Asbestos-Cement Review*. 1958 no 12. p. 27.

his adventures in alien lands, and the architect back home designing modern interiors. This contradiction was crucial for Peter Smithson when Haan presented his houses in Otterlo.

“Can I say something? Well, I think that with this nomadism, that camping architect – there’s a style problem involved here. Now, I think if you’re a camping architect, it should be possible to evolve a sort of Schwitters aesthetic. This is a very important issue, because in the plans of these buildings, and I know the way that Herman thinks about this, there is a possibility to see things, because he’s an anthropologist, of living in a fundamental way, cooking, sleeping, and so on, and he says that these things are not rooms, they are processes, in the same way we say it’s not people, when they’re in the street, but flow. I mean, it acquires a different characteristic. Now, when you think like this, in a way you’re committed to finding a language appropriate to these concepts; this is the whole basic thing about what one would call jargonly main-street modern, that is, there’s a certain language here, used in the architecture, which is, speaking historically for a moment, from Rietveld and so on, in the later period, and I think it’s not quite appropriate to the way of thought that’s behind it and to the Schwitters method of collecting the material. You know one ought to be able to make a poetry of common things without imposing a poetry which is essentially a sophisticated poetry with sophisticated materials. You follow this? I mean it’s a sort of criticism, but I have to say it.”⁷⁷

A life flipping between a nomad-camping architect and, at the same time, designer of glass-boxes was too much of an incoherent language for Smithson’s brutalist aesthetic. This is most apparent in another portrait of Haan (Fig. 28). Compared with his depiction among the Dogon (Fig. 8), a smoothly-shaved Haan sits comfortably looking through the transparent facade. He is at home. Sedentary in a BKF chair – which just some ten years before had been acquired by Edgar Kaufmann for the MoMA collection⁷⁸ – Haan stares outwards. Behind him, the coffee-table, at times drawing board, is now decorated with flowers. At its centre a china teapot, which appears contrapuntal to







Fig. 29a- Weaver, Thomas. *No title* [Denise Scott-Brown in her living-room] 2018. Courtesy of Thomas Weaver.

Fig. 29b- Madelon Vriesendorp in her studio-house,
London

the rows of pots lining in the shelves. Rough, elementary, they are his findings, the fruits of his desert journeys⁷⁹. An African mask in the background completes the collection. Precisely in this material culture from the fringes brought home, the portrait is something of an icon of the involvement of ethnography in architecture. A retroactive version of paradigmatic cases like Robert Venturi & Denise Scott Brown or Madelon Vriesendorp (Fig. 29); always shown in their homes, surrounded by their ethnographic collection. However, arguably Rem Koolhaas is the one resembling Haan the most; not that much for use of Dali's *Paranoiac Critical Method* as an approach to Manhattan, neither for his 1969 film *The White Slave* dealing with a declining Europe in the North African context – a rented camel from the Amsterdam Zoo in the premiere included⁸⁰. Rather because Koolhaas has something of Haan's schizophrenic Dutch public figure travelling abroad just to return home to build modern houses. This is evident in Koolhaas's West African enterprise. His two documentaries on the Nigerian capital – *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2002) and *Lagos: Wide & Close: An interactive Journey into an Exploding City* (2004) – are constructed as chronicles in which the viewer can only see the city either through aerial shots or through Koolhaas' eyes (Fig. 30)⁸¹. In fact, being the pop-culture of Las Vegas, Manhattanism or Lagos, in all of them, touring to the fringes of architectural concerns played a key role for the reconceptualisation of their contemporary metropolises. Haan and van Eyck just made so much more evident the connection between desert and home.

This was perhaps because of following Griaule. In the emblematic text that van Eyck read in *Minotaure*, Griaule already augured that understanding ethnography as a professional practice

(previous page)
Fig. 28- Cornelius, Violette. *Herman Haan in his house* in Vollaard, Piet. 1995. p. 39.

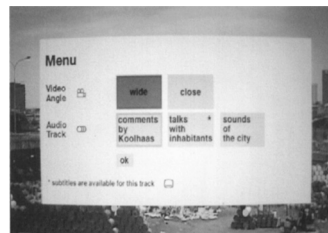


Fig. 30a- Koolhaas, Rem. *Lagos/Koolhaas*. 2002.

Fig. 30b- Koolhaas, Rem. *Lagos: Wide & Close. An interactive Journey into an Exploding City*. 2004.



Fig. 31- Aldo van Eyck's collection from Strauven, Francis. 1998.
pp.454 & 455.

would not be enough. “[L]’ethnographie (...) est encore aujourd’hui plus une vocation gratuite qu’une carrière.[Ethnography (...) is still today more of a free [unpaid] vocation than a career.]”⁸² Haan’s practice moved in-between both, overlapping the non-profitable and the professional aspects. Van Eyck very much thought of Haan in those terms, neither only at their adventures abroad, nor in his living room, but even during his presentation in Otterlo. Van Eyck introduced Haan to the CIAM,

“He’s a sublime amateur, a Sunday artist. It’s not an insult – he’s a Sunday artist in everything except in life: he’s a Sunday artist in architecture; he’s a Sunday artist in anthropology – he’s extremely good at anthropology. I have been to the Sahara with him. This is just a sort of introduction, trying to get you into the spirit of this adventure.”⁸³

The ethnographer-architect had something of Sunday practice, a vocational aspect in which the personal was invested. The practice didn’t prescribe professionalism in any field, but an amateurism that connected the desert with the dilettante living-room collection. It is not a surprise, then, that one of Griaule’s first publications linked to the Mission Dakar-Djibouti was his *Instructions Sommaires pour les Collecteurs d’Objets Ethnographiques* [Summary Instructions for Collectors of Ethnographic Objects], prefacing the journey as a mission statement⁸⁴, where it argued for the urgency of constituting collections of material culture. Van Eyck, despite his non-interfering position with regarding the Dogon, did have a collection of objects back home. Not only Dogon, but a miscellaneous arrangement of sculptures, vases, figurines and utensils from Anatolia, Mexico, Alaska and the Amazon (Fig. 31). Surrounded by the crowded interior, the collection did not only work, as Strauven explains, as a way of “carr[ying] him almost daily on imaginary journeys to far-off places and times”⁸⁵ ; but also, it worked the way he describes van Eyck in action “arranging and rearranging them in different groupings.” Shifting the disparate items van Eyck becomes something other than just a Griaulian collector. More than in his populated shelves, this bringing together of various

483



cultures was exemplified in the Otterlo Circles (Fig. 4), encompassing within its circumferences works of different cultures distant in time and space. As he put forward in the speech at Otterlo: “I would like to introduce the term by Malraux, the *Museum without Walls*.”⁸⁶ Published in 1951 within *Les Voix du Silence* [The Voices of Silence], the *Musée Imaginaire* – in the original French – constituted an attempt to deal with a history of art in a universal scope, discussing together works from remote times and cultures. A movement, as Malraux argues in the text, that was enabled by photographic reproductions of the works of art. Photographic reproduction didn’t affect the production of works of art as such, but it did enable the bringing together of works scattered around the globe. It prompted a simultaneity of vision of works physically remote in time and space. Despite the influence in his clustering of images that Edward Steichen’s 1955 MoMA exhibition and book *The Family of Man* in his work⁸⁷, van Eyck pointed to Malraux as his source. Though similar in their large-encompassing scope through photography, the Frenchman’s working position was worlds apart from Steichen’s. This standpoint was condensed in the photographs that Maurice Jarnoux took for *Paris Match*⁸⁸ (Fig. 32). Malraux is at the centre, surrounded by the art reproductions that he observes, arranges and reorganises. In his reformulating history of



Fig. 32- Jarnoux, Maurice. *writer Andre Malraux poses in his house of Boulogne near Paris working at his book Le Musée Imaginaire or Imaginary Museum 2nd volume Du bas relief aux Grottes Sacrees.* 1953. ©Getty Images
(following page)

art moving away from the Western museum-based, indeed he tore down the walls of the museum. However, it seems that the works of art that were external to the museum now gathered together in another interior, his living room at Boulogne-sur-Seine. The most appealing aspect of Malraux's portrait is his easiness, his being at home in the history of art. Insouciant, he is shown smoking, installed in his armchair, meditative next to the duet piano, and finally blasé recumbent on the carpet. He is shown as the short of Sunday-art historian that van Eyck would connect with. Yet, the domestic of the scale contrasted with the universal of the business. It was not, like in Griaule, a question of simply having a collection, but rather about the possibility of overlapping the distant realms of the alien objects d'art and the closeness of a living-room.

In the most reproduced version (Fig. 32a), Malraux takes a standpoint not that far from the one in his finding of Sheba from the cockpit of the Farman 190; at his feet, history unfolds, visualising it into a continuum, collapsing time into a musée imaginaire – or a *cité imaginaire*, in Sheba's case. Van Eyck's point of view in the Circles is clearly different⁸⁹. If in Malraux the walls are removed and the “museum” is without walls, his position is yet external to it, looking from above. Van Eyck, in contrast, is inside. His standpoint in relation to the circles is internal to the continuum constituted between the poles of the desert and his home. His ethnographic-architect practice takes a different form of exploration, an immersive rather than aerial research. Despite the architectural half of the equation, he didn't take a Daedalus-like point of view, but contrary, as he quoted the term later in his writing, a “labyrinthian” mode of exploration⁹⁰.

Nevertheless, the whole setting of Otterlo indicates that, despite universal in scope, his question was very much a Euro-centric concern. His circles were a way of dealing with the decadence of the contemporary city; the continuation of the mission into the Dogon, as well. As he sketched in the early article in *Architectural Forum*, his incursion to the West African civilisation had a ‘learning from’ attitude⁹¹. To the problematic of the modern metropolis, the Dogon villages offered a

way forward. This was an interesting reversal of the colonial logic, in a time in which the colonies were in the process of being dismantled. It was not anymore the colonised that had to adapt to the advanced Western civilisation. The Dogon was rather a form at the vanishing point of the European cities' advancement. "Are we going to catch up with the Dogon people before finally there is nothing left to catch up with? This is the challenge to contemporary urbanism"⁹², as the essay concludes. Words not that distant from Koolhaas's approach to Lagos. "We are resisting the notion that Lagos represents an African city en route to becoming modern. (...) Rather, we think it possible to argue that Lagos represents a developed, extreme, paradigmatic case-study of a city at the forefront of globalising modernity. This is to say that Lagos is not catching up with us. Rather, we may be catching up with Lagos."⁹³ Or, in a more provocative way, as Koolhaas states indicating the ultimate logic of the project, "[t]he African city forces the reconceptualization of the city itself. The fact that many of the trends of modern Western cities can be seen in hyperbolic guise in Lagos suggests that to write about the African city is to write about the terminal condition of Chicago, London, or Los Angeles. It is to examine the city elsewhere, in the developing world. It is to reconsider the modern city and to suggest a paradigm for its future. In short, we would argue, it is to do away with the inherited notion of "city" once and for all."⁹⁴ Perhaps van Eyck didn't want to get rid once and for all of the city. However, the ethnographic-architectural explorations were a way of reconceptualising the city, putting its exteriors as vanishing point of its possible future. Whether we have caught up with it or not, what got caught was the Dogon, entangled in van Eyck and Haan's internalising movement. It was not anymore an exterior to the metropolis, but an element that could be taken back home and formulated as alternative to the development of their contemporary metropolis.

Getting back to Haan's living-room, there was one more member of the ethnographic-architectural crew. The portrait was taken by Violette Cornelius. Somehow a latecomer of the Mission, she

Fig. 33a- Images of Violette Cornelius illustrating van Eyck's speech at Otterlo, in Newman, Oscar. 1961. pp. 32-33.

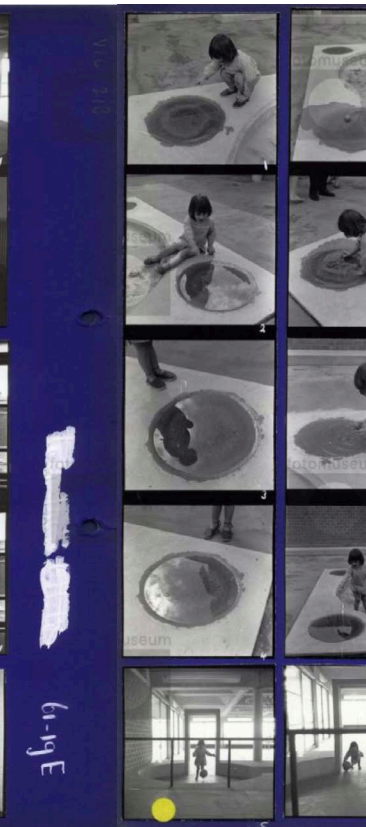
Violette, Cornelius. *Het Burgerweeshuis van Aldo van Eyck*. 1961

b- VIC / 218 / 1-15

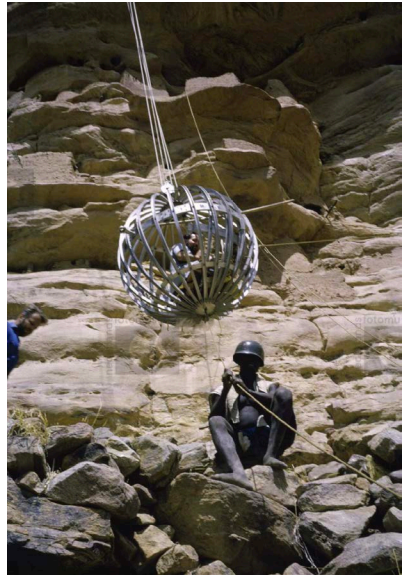
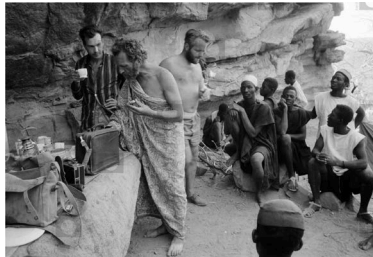
c- VIC / 1987 / 1-10

d- VIC / 219 / 1-12

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.







was present in Otterlo with her photographs of van Eyck's 'Children's Home' – the famous orphanage that van Eyck built in Amsterdam and that he presented along with the circles⁹⁵ (Fig. 33) –, she was more formally integral part of the team when she joined Haan's research in the Dogon in 1964. Early after the war she became a renowned architectural photographer until she turned to ethnography documenting in India, Peru, Yemen, Turkey, Kuwait, the Amazon, and other countries in Africa (Fig. 34). In the opening of the NCRV documentary, Cornelius is shown armed with her camera (Fig. 20b, Cornelius is looking down at her camera). Otterlo, Dogon and Haan's house. Cornelius was a shadowed presence in the crew, despite her photographs being relevant ethnographic documents. However, what she missed for arriving late to the mission was significant. She was not in the cross-desert jeep team. The experience of the desert was not yet another stop in the itinerary of the mission. It was a basis for the following steps. Haan, as Corneille affirmed of van Eyck, had a mirage-based conception of the desert. Henri Hugot, that accompanied Haan in the Saharan journeys, recalls him in a mixture of dislocations in the desert (Fig. 35).

“We left all four towards the Îmmidir in a Volkswagen C which, after long experience in the Sahara was foolhardy and could have cost us dear. We had a 50 liter water butt and some other containers which soon turned out to be entirely insufficient. The map at 1:200.000 of the region indicated the presence of ‘gueltas’ in the area (shallow pools of water often covered in sand, which one has to ‘intuit’ rather than actually spot) and so we set off in search of them. I was extremely lucky, digging around with my shovel, to find a muddy pool of water, but water nonetheless. Herman meanwhile cast himself as director, to film the spectacle of the new ‘Raft of the Medusa’. I always asked myself why? But I think that I found the answer: he needed money for his expeditions and the point of his film projections was to impress potential sponsors.”

Though Hugot's explanation of Haan's strange reactions points to money-driven intentions, they actually follow quite a standard European

(facing page) Fig. 34a- Violette, Cornelius. *Architectuur Herman Haan*. 1953-60.

VIC / 1973 / 1 & VIC / 1971 / 1

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 34b- Violette, Cornelius. *Tellem-expeditie*. 1964.

VIC / 598 / 15 ; VIC / 618 / 17 & VIC / 641 / 4

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 34c- Violette, Cornelius. *Ethiopie*. 1969. VIC / 2870 / 13c

d- Violette, Cornelius. *Peru*. 1969. VIC / 2708 / 3

e- Violette, Cornelius. *Kokende vrouw, Irak*. 1964-66.

VIC / 10152 / 19

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

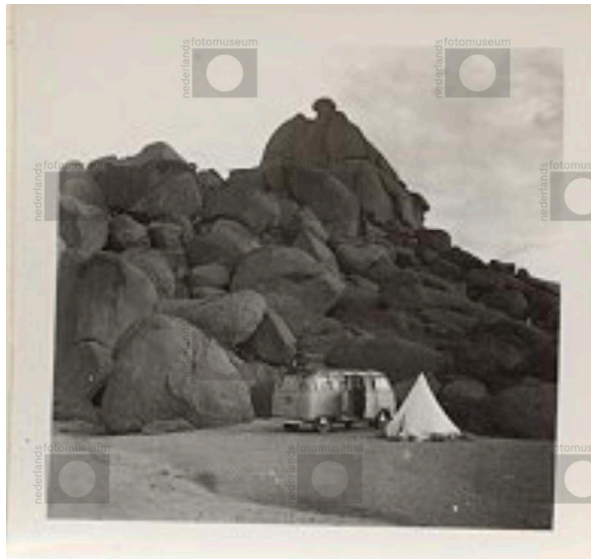


Fig. 35a- Haan, Herman P.C. *Honorair-conservator, architect Herman Haan met zijn echtgenotie Hansje en de directeur van het Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde de heer dr. C. Nooteboom (links met hoed), vóór vertrek naar Noord-Afrika.* 1955.WMR / 901054

b. Haan, Herman P.C. *Het busje van Herman en Hansje Haan tijdens de Sabara-expeditie, Algerije.* 1953. WMR / 901342
© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

desert-explorer experience: unsuited vehicle, thirst, misleading maps and discovery. The selection of the film's theme 'Raft of the Medusa' – following the events of survival of 15 men from the shipwreck of a French boat off the West African coast in 1816 – would have suited more the opening lines with the shipwrecked crew of Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique*. Better known for the 1819 painting of Théodore Géricault, his depiction has little to do with Haan's wreckage in the desert, other than a reversal of terms. The survivors of the Medusa were looking for land in the sea, Haan's crew was thirsting for water in a sea of sand. This dislocation of what doesn't belong in the desert constituted the point of departure for the mission. Strangely enough, Koolhaas used the image of the Raft of the Medusa as the original discoverers of Manhattanism. It is only symptomatic of the displacing shipwrecked figure that Koolhaas narrates the story as "[a]fter the shipwreck in the Mediterranean of the Medusa (...)"⁹⁶ when the catastrophe in fact happened in the Atlantic. Dislocating was not much of a problem for Koolhaas or Haan. The metaphor was quite a movable object.

For van Eyck, the experience of the cyclist mirage only added up to the paradoxical oppressive feeling of being at the centre of the compass. In a more optimistic tone, he described the paradox of being at the centre in the peripheries to his friend Carola Giedion-Welcker – Sigfried Giedion's wife.

"(...) We had an amazing time penetrating the Sahara (Hoggar mountains) this winter. It's our world all right. The Tademaït plateau; the Tidikelt, the Tafedest; we've never really felt so at home anywhere – we were actually inside Ernst's *histoire naturelle*. Tell me tale – ... hats off! We've verified him now. It's the truth –& both sides of the dream. (The little landscape in your green *anthol. surrealiste*.) We came back – corroded clean..."⁹⁷

Though defined as dream-like experience, it is striking that van Eyck feels so at home in the desert – more than anywhere else. In his 1951 desert experience there's already a link connecting the two poles of the

mission: the desert and the interior. The journey through the Sahara brought a sense of the absolute exterior overlapping with the feeling of being at home. A form of surrealist dream by superimposition, bridging the two milieux together. When van Eyck and Haan originally conceived Africa as a non-Western exterior – in the way Nietzsche, Flaubert, Loti, or Le Corbusier thought of their excursions – what is remarkable in their ethnographic-architectural mission is the complexity that unfolds. By internalising the exterior through the circles (van Eyck), getting immersed by becoming object of research (Haan), and thinking through their adaptable living-room collections (van Eyck and Haan), Africa was not anymore an exterior, but rather in a continuous interior between desert and home. For them, the mission Sahara-Rotterdam was not anymore a matter of two distinct realms in opposition, but the possibility of understanding the desert and the metropolis as a continuum.

Endnotes

1. As quoted in Strauven, Francis. *Aldo van Eyck: the shape of relativity*. 1998. Amsterdam, Architectura & Natura. p. 145.
2. cf. Banham, Reyner. 1989. p. 98.
3. cf. Teyssot, George. *Aldo van Eyck's Threshold: The Story of an Idea in Log*. Winter 2008. No. 11. pp. 33-48. Later published with slight changes in Teyssot, George. *A Topology of Everyday Constellations*. 2013. As well as Jaschke, Karen. *Architects in the Field: the African Journeys of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan in Thesis*, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar*. January 2003. Vol. 49. No. 1.
4. cf. van Eyck, Aldo. *Writings. Volume 2. Collected Articles and Other Writings. 1947-1998*. 2008. Amsterdam, SUN. p. 25.
5. Griaule, Marcel. *Introduction Méthodologique in Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 2. pp. 6-12.
6. cf. Ibid. p. 8.
7. Ibid. p. 9.
8. cf. Dainese, Elisa. *Le Corbusier, Marcel Griaule, and the Modern Movement: exploring the habitat from the airplane in EAEA-11 conference*. 2013. Roma, Edizioni Nuova Cultura.
9. cf. Beek, Walter E. A. van. *Dogon Restudied: A Field Evaluation of the Work of Marcel Griaule in Current Anthropology*. April 1991. Vol. 32. No. 2. pp. 139-158.
10. Griaule, Marcel. *Introduction Méthodologique in Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 2. p. 11.
11. cf. Jaschke, Karen. January 2003. Vol. 49. No. 1. p. 21.

12. cf. Strauven, Francis. 1998. p. 144.
13. cf. Griaule, Marcel. *Mission Dakar-Djibouti, (loi du 31 mars 1931) : Rapport général (mai 1931-mai 1932)*. 1932. p. 7-9.
14. cf. Strauven, Francis. 1998. p. 143. Also, Jaschke, Karen. January 2003. pp. 22-23. As well as McCarter, Robert. *Aldo van Eyck*. 2015. London, Yale University Press. p. 36.
15. cf. van Eyck, Aldo. *Constant and the Abstracts* in van Eyck, Aldo. 2008. pp. 64-67. Van Eyck criticises specifically contemporary Parisian abstraction in art.
16. During his student years van Eyck tried to enter Tunisia but he was negated the visa. cf. Strauven, Francis. 1998. p. 144.
17. His first journey to Africa was to Tunisia in 1950. cf. Jaschke, Karen. January 2003. p. 22.
18. As quoted in ibid. p. 23.
19. Louis Kahn, "Aldo van Eyck..." in 1971 interview, in *What Will Be Has Always Been: The Words of Louis I. Kahn*, Richard Saul Wurman, ed. 1986. New York, Rizzoli; as quoted in McCarter, Robert.
20. This was the original version of the circles that he later edited it to be published within *The Child, the City and the Artist* (prepared in 1962).
21. cf. Van Eyck, Aldo. *Bouwen in de Zuidelijke Oasen [Building in the Southern Oases]* in *Forum*. 1953. No. 1.
22. Van Eyck, Aldo. *Is Architecture Going to Reconcile Basic Values?* in Newman, Oscar. *CLAM '59 in Otterlo*. 1961. London. Alec Tiranti. p. 27. This clarification did not belong to the original speech, that simply brought together the three images under the idea that they "correspond to man's fundamental desire for enclosure." (in van Eyck, Aldo. 2008. p. 199) The edited version was prepared for the 1961 book containing the speeches of the conference.
23. Van Eyck, Aldo. *Is Architecture Going to Reconcile Basic Values?* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 26.
24. cf. Strauven, Francis. 1998. p. 348
25. Van Eyck, Aldo. 2008. p. 200. This is part of the original speech that was eliminated in the published procedures of the conference.
26. Van Eyck, Aldo. *Is Architecture Going to Reconcile Basic Values?* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 27.
27. Haan, Herman. *Life in the Desert* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 156.
28. cf. Colomina, Beatriz. *Friends of the Future: A Conversation with Peter Smithson in October*. Autumn 2000. Vol. 94. pp. 3-30.
29. Newman, Oscar. *Preface* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 7.
30. Haan would later show the films of his African journeys in the meeting of the

- Team Ten at Bagnols-sur-Cèze in 1960. cf. Risselada, Max. *Team 10: 1953-81, in search of a utopia of the present*. Rotterdam, NAI Publishers. p. 85.
31. Haan, Herman. *Life in the Desert* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 151.
32. Newman, Oscar. *Introduction to Life in the Desert* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 150.
33. Newman, Oscar. *Preface* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 8.
34. cf. Smithson, Alison. *The emergence of Team 10 out of C.I.A.M.* 1982. London. Architectural Association. As well as Pedret, Annie. *Team 10: an archival history*. 2013. London, Routledge. pp. 197-204.
35. cf. Smithson, Alison. *The emergence of Team 10 out of C.I.A.M.* 1982. As well as Mumford, Eric. *The CLAM discourse on urbanism, 1928-1960*. 2000. Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press. And Schwarzer, Mitchell, *CLAM: City at the End of History in Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning the Avant-Garde*, New York: Monacelli Press, 1997, pp 232-261.
36. Di Carlo, Giancarlo. *Talk on the Situation of Contemporary Architecture* in Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 86; as well as in *Architectural Design*. May 1960. p. 205.
37. Rogers, Ernesto N. *The CLAM at the museum in Casabella*. 1959. Vol. 232. p. 2.
38. cf. Short video 'Death of CLAM' as Staged by Team 10. 1959, in the archives of Jaap Bakema at the Het Nieuwe Instituut.
39. cf. Mumford, Eric. *The CLAM discourse on urbanism, 1928-1960*. 2000. Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press.
40. cf. Van den Heuvel, Dirk. *The elusive bigness of Bakema* in Van den Heuvel, Dirk(ed.) et al. *Jaap Bakema and the Open Society*. 2018. Amsterdam, Archis Publishers. p. 16.
41. cf. Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 342. As well as Peter Smithson's impressions on cliques in his life in cf. Colomina, Beatriz. Autumn 2000. p. 5.
42. cf. *Resurrection Move Fails at Otterlo* in *Architectural Review*. Feb. 1960. Vol. 127. No. 756. p. 78-79.
43. Newman, Oscar. 1961. p. 221.
44. cf. Smithson, Alison. *Team 10 meetings: 1953-1984*. 1991. Delf, Publikatieburo Bouwkunde. p. 27.
45. cf. Baird, George. *The Publication of Meaning in Architecture* in *TEAM 10: Keeping the Language of Modern Architecture Alive* (Conference organised by the Faculty of Architecture. Delft University of Technology. January 5th-6th, 2006. TU Delft. p. 73-86.
46. cf. Rudovsky, Bernard. *Architecture without Architects: a short introduction to non-pedigreed architecture*. 1964. London, Academy Editions.
47. cf. Strauven, Francis. 1998. p. 380.
48. cf. *Introduction to Chapter 9 in van Eyck, Aldo*. 2008. p. 347.
49. Van Eyck, Aldo. *A Miracle of Moderation* in *Forum*, July 1967, p. 35; English version

in *Via*, no.1, p.15.

50. Van Eyck, Aldo. *Architecture of the Dogon* in *Architectural Forum*. Sept. 1961. Vol. 115. No. 5. p. 186.

51. Ibid.

52. cf. Jaschke, Karin. *Mythical Journeys: Ethnography, Archaeology, and the Attraction of Tribal Cultures in the Work of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan*. PhD Dissertation. 2012. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University. pp. 107-152.

53. Haan, Herman. *The House is the Belly of the Mother* in *Architects' Year Book*. 1965. London. Elek Books. Haan also published a much more descriptive text the same year in the journal *Byggekunst*. cf. Haan, Herman. *Dogon* in *Byggekunst*. 1965. No 2. pp. 29-43.

54. cf. Haan, Herman. 1965. p. 139.

55. For a detailed discussion on Haan's expeditions to the Dogon, cf. Jaschke, Karin. *Mythical Journeys: Ethnography, Archaeology, and the Attraction of Tribal Cultures in the Work of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan*. PhD Dissertation. 2012. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University. pp. 107-152.

56. Haan, Herman. 1965. p. 130.

57. cf. Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 111.

58. cf. Bedaux, Rogier M.A. *Rediscovering the Tellem of Mali* in *Archeology*. May/June 1982. Vol. 35, no.3. p. 29.

59. cf. Ibid. p. 31. The research trip was planned by Johan Huizinga, director of the Institute of Human Biology, State University at Utrecht. The crew included Jan Rietveld – son of Gerrit Rietveld, former college in van Eyck's studio and participant in the Sahara trip of 1961.

60. cf. Haan, Herman. 1965. p. 130.

61. As quoted in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 112.

62. cf. ibid.

63. cf. ibid, pp. 112-116.

64. As quoted in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 113.

65. cf. Ibid., p. 124.

66. cf. Ibid., p. 125.

67. Jaschke, Karin. *Aldo van Eyck and the Dog Image* in Buckley, C. & Rhee, P. (eds.). *Architects' journeys: building, traveling, thinking*. 2011. New York; Pamplona, GSAPP Books ; T6 Ediciones. p. 87-90.

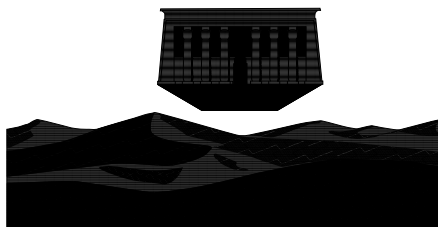
68. As quoted in Ibid., p. 89.

69. As quoted in Kohn, Eric. *The Ethnographic Magician: Jean Rouch's African Films in Cinéma*. Winter 2012. Vol. 38, no. 1. p. 24.

70. cf. ibid., p. 25.

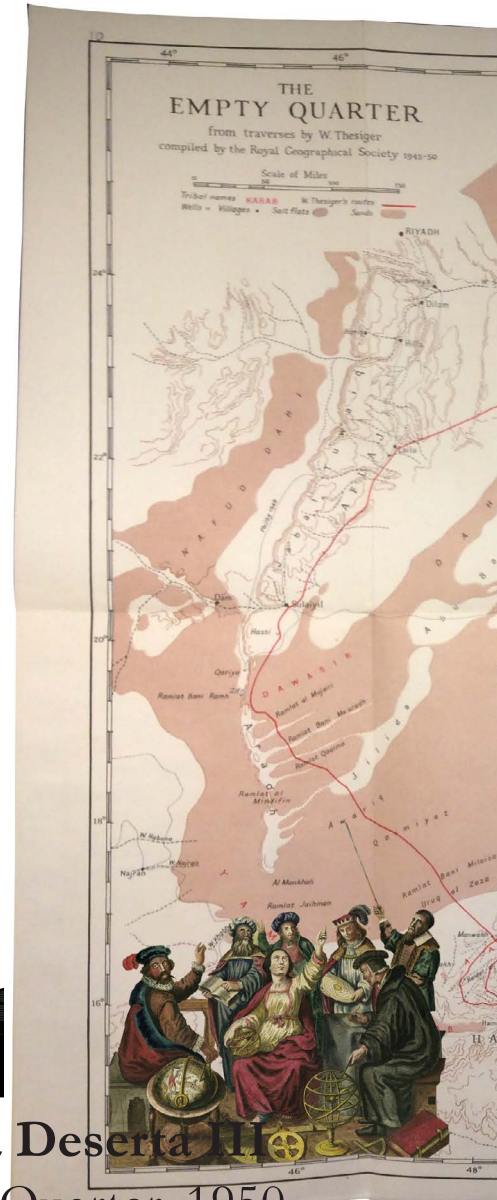
71. As argued by Karin Jaschke in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 109.
72. As quoted in Jaschke, Karin. *Mythopoesis of Place and Culture: Aldo van Eyck, Herman Haan, and the Dogon* in *TEAM 10: Keeping the Language of Modern Architecture Alive* (Conference organised by the Faculty of Architecture. Delft University of Technology. January 5th-6th, 2006. TU Delft. p. 116.
73. Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 119.
74. cf. Blom, Huib. *Dogon: Images & Traditions*. 2010. Brussels, Momentum. p. 276.
75. As quoted in Walker, Ian. 1997. p. 648.
76. cf. *Architectural Design*. 1957 Oct, pp. 362-363; *Architectural Design*. 1959 Nov. pp. 455-457; *International Asbestos-Cement Review*. 1958 no 12. pp. 27-30; and *The Architect and Building News*. 1960 Sept 28. pp. 395-403.
77. Smithson, Peter. "Recordings of 10th CIAM Meeting at Otterlo." No. 3 01, Thursday lunchtime. As quoted in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 165.
78. cf. MoMA collection object 715.1943.a-b.
79. cf. Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 163-64.
80. cf. Lootsma, Bart. *Koolhaas, Constant and Dutch Culture in the 1960's* in architecturaltheory.eu. September 4, 2007. p. 7. Renting a camel for the premiere was something that, anecdotally, Haan had done for his 1956 exhibition *Holbewoners, stapelbouwers en nomaden*; his though, was stuffed. cf. Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 87.
81. cf. Godlewski, Joseph. *Alien and Distant: Rem Koolhaas on Film in Lagos, Nigeria* in *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*. 2010. Vol. 21. Issue 2. pp. 7-19.
82. Griaule, Marcel. *Introduction Méthodologique* in *Minotaure*. 1933. p. 8.
83. Van Eyck, Aldo. *Recordings of 10th CLAM Meeting at Otterlo.* no. 3 01, Thursday lunchtime as quoted in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 156.
84. cf. Griaule, Marcel. *Instructions Sommaires pour les Collecteurs d'Objets Ethnographiques*. May 1931. Musée d'Ethnographie et Mission Scientifique Dakar-Djibouti. Paris, Palais du Trocadéro.
85. Strauven, Francis. 1998. p. 454.
86. "Recordings of 10th CIAM Meeting at Otterlo." Archive Jacob Bakema (NAI, Rotterdam), BAKE, n.p., 20a, as quoted in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 233.
cf. also Van Eyck, Aldo. 2008. p. 199-201.
87. cf. Jaschke, Karin. 2012 for the influence of *The Family of Man* in the articles of *Forum* when van Eyck was editor.
88. cf. Grasskamp, Walter. *The book on the floor: André Malraux and the imaginary museum*. 2016. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. As well as, Campbell, Mark. *Blood Simple* in *AA Files*. 2013. Issue 66. pp. 153-155.

89. cf. Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 241.
90. cf. Ibid.
91. In the conclusion of the article van Eyck affirms, “[w]hat we can learn from them is a planning prerogative (...)”(van Eyck, Aldo. Sept. 1961. p. 186.)
92. Van Eyck, Aldo. Sept. 1961. p. 186
93. Belanger, P. Chuihua, J.C. Comaroff, J. et al. *Lagos [Harvard Project on the City]* in Koolhaas, Rem et al. *Mutations*. 2001. Bordeaux, Arc en rêve centre d’architecture. p. 653.
94. Ibid.
95. cf. Newman, Oscar. 1961. pp. 28-34.
96. Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan*. 1978. London, Thames and Hudson. p. 252.
97. Aldo van Eyck to Carola Giedion-Welcker, probably June 1951, as quoted in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 179.



Excursus on Arabia Deserta III

Fata Morgana. Empty Quarter, 1950





As late as 1992, the quest for Arabian forgotten cities continued. On February 5, the New York Times published a piece of news on the recent finding of the ancient fallen city of Ubar. The expedition was technologically advanced – in its use of space remote-sensing imaging, and radar overflying detection. However, it was furthermore painstakingly classic: in its search for a city whose debacle figures in the Arabian Nights, and in the archaeologist arguing it could have been the natural route for the Biblical Wise Man on their way to Bethlehem. Classic-high-tech was an interesting overlapping, when the actual clue was given by an infrared view marking a camels' trail that suddenly vanished in a sand dune and continued its way on the other side. The archaeologists described their high-tech search as led by ancient maps and accounts, taking them to the city that was once baptised by T. E. Lawrence as the 'Atlantis of the Sands'. Towards the end of his life, the British legend planned an exploration to the Arabian region known as the Empty Quarter. He didn't manage to carry it out. The baton was taken by another Briton, Wilfred Thesiger, known locally as *Mubarak bin London* [the blessed one of London]. Quite an epic name, if it was not because his blessing was being the last explorer in Arabia to do it in a proper European way, that is, garbed in Bedu costumes, riding a camel surrounded by tensions between armed nomadic tribes, keeping track of every aspect that surrounded his adventure and putting them in a travelogue format (Fig. 1). His several crossings of the Empty Quarter between 1945 and 1950 were published in 1959 as *Arabian Sands*. In-between his leaving Arabia and the publication of the book, the end of traditional exploration had come. "If anyone goes there now looking for the life I led they will not find it (...) Today the desert where I travelled is scarred with the tracks of lorries and littered with discarded junk imported from Europe and America."¹ The oil exploration had not only brought Western debris, but a termination to nomadic life. Industrialisation and urbanisation were displacing the desert forms of living into settled modern habitats, prompted not by unearthed legendary cities, but by subterranean black gold. "I knew that for them [the Bedu] the danger lay, not in the hardship of their



Fig. 1a-Thesiger, Wilfred. *Group portrait of Wilfred Thesiger with the four members of his travelling party who accompanied him on his first crossing of the Rub' al Khali (Empty Quarter).* February 15-23, 1947. Ref. 2004.130.6828.1 ©Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

THE
EMPTY QUARTER
from traverses by W. Thesiger
compiled by the Royal Geographical Society 1942-50

from traverses by W. Thesiger

compiled by the Royal Geographical Society 1945-50

Scale of Miles _____

Tribal names **KARAB** W. Thesiger's routes
Wells • Villages • Salt Flats • Sands

Tribal names **KARAB** W. Thesiger's routes
Wells • Villages • Salt Flats • Sands

Tribal names **KARAB** W. Thesiger's routes
Wells • Villages • Salt Flats • Sands





lives, but in the boredom and frustration they would feel when they renounced it. The tragedy was that that choice would not be theirs; economic forces beyond their control would eventually drive them into the towns to hang about street-corners as ‘unskilled labour’.”²

While obviously there’s quite a straightforward paradox in Thesiger’s nostalgic anti-Western critique having in mind that he was renowned for his photographic documentation of Bedu life (Fig. 2) – images that populate the book and finally made their way to the collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, composing some 5000 slides of life in Arabia – carrying his 1933 Leica II as a vital element of his apparel didn’t seem contradictory. Nevertheless, there’s a further paradox that, as a reader keeps hitting you, and that doesn’t belong to Thesiger’s book only but cuts through all of the European explorers. It is a question as simple as ‘if you are looking for a city, why the assiduous obsession of finding it precisely in an Empty Quarter?’.

Upon his return to London after the journey, Thesiger lectured at the Royal Geographical Society. His ‘Across the Empty Quarter’, concluded with a reflection of his arrival at Mukalla, reaching the end of the seven month sojourn:

“I had come amongst these Badu as a Christian and a stranger to share a communal life where privacy was unknown, where every word was public and every action seen. Crowded together in the immensity of the desert, we had lived subject to the rigid discipline of their ways. Now I had reached the end of my 2000-mile journey. For six months and more I had travelled with them, and between us was the bond of hardships endured together and the comradeship of desert life. (...) I know their way of life are an anachronism and will tend to disappear, but I also know that amongst them in the desert I have found a freedom of the spirit which may not survive their passing.”³

His nostalgic ending had something of Aldo van Eyck’s ‘feeling at home’ in the desert. He was a stranger yet the journey generated bonds

among him and the Bedu. Bonds that the journey was dissolving as it touched its end. However, a form of life that Modernity was putting a stop to. It was a form of life vanishing. A trope that has a lot to do with the desert itself. The journey to the desert is a locus of disappearance. The desert operates by absence, by intensifying what is not there. Aldo van Eyck also read it in this way:

“It seems to me that when one has to do without one of life’s essential accompaniments, one will experience the others more intensely; that precisely because of the lack of the one, the other is experienced more fully – that the thing which is lacked would be felt just as intensely is clear enough. Lack of water makes both water and everything that is not water clearer. The lack of something as elementary as water will cause the elementary – the origin – to be experienced more intensely. In the Sahara, one is so immersed in vastness and tininess that one begins to envisage both the phenomenon of matter in which the visible and tangible have taken shape and the phenomenon of life in a different temporal/spatial connection; that matter, life (existence), space and time form a continuity, a simultaneous sensation. One understands why nature is not a passive backdrop for life but the agent through which man experiences this simultaneous sensation. / *Note on the experience of the elementary in the desert. Translation of a handwritten note, probably drafted in 1951.*”⁴

His experience of the desert is a mixture of absence – lack of sign in the desert – and presence – that very absence pointing towards what is not there. Admittedly, it seems rather a too convoluted note for having been taken on the spot in the desert in a moment of lucidity. Though playing to be a revelatory thought, it is rather product of the mirage tradition. One could read van Eyck’s note as a Koolhaas’s *idée reçue* “[t]he emptiness of the desert creates a condition of questioning, of a more existential way of thinking.”⁵ Koolhaas follows the tradition of Lawrence’s wisdom of the sands – that we were commenting at the beginning of the cluster. Van Eyck is a fully-fledged product of the other idea of desert-city. In his desert, the sign makes the absent



Fig. 3-Aldo and Hannie van Eyck in the Tademaït, Algerian Sahara, 1951 in van Eyck, Aldo. 2008. p. 85.

signified object be ‘experienced more intensely’. If we substitute van Eyck’s ‘water’ for what is really missing for any architect travelling through the Sahara, we get the feeling of the kind of thinking that was operated in the desert. Though not expressively articulated, it is easy to understand the argument that the architect-traveller to the desert is all about what is missing: the metropolis. If their journeys were originally an escape from the modern city in search for an alternative of some sort, it was precisely the modern city that was eventually reflected upon in the desert.

The quest for a desert-city contradicts the received idea of the journey through the desert as an illuminating experience. It cannot be reviewed in Lawrence’s terms of uninterrupted meditations. It is rather through the notion of a mirage – an *other* knowledge that is non-rational, misleading, elusive and spellbinding – where the experience makes sense. It is the *Fata Morgana*, a very particular form of mirage, that casts light on the journeys to find a desert-city.

Jesuit priests are not commonly associated with mirage-researchers. The closer they would get to the visual anomalies would be in their metaphysical inquiries, or perhaps in their fascination with miracles. Nevertheless, there are three Jesuits that became *Fata Morgana* connoisseurs. The first one – who is more familiar in the field of architecture – was Athanasius Kircher. Among many other things – and he is actually argued to be the last man who knew everything⁶ – he is known to be the first one leaving constancy of this peculiar form of optical illusion. He travelled in 1636 to the coast of the Messina stretch where the phenomenon was first baptised. However, he never saw it himself. Nevertheless, interestingly enough he reported the witnesses’s description in very architectural terms. This is his text in the treatise *Ars magna lucis et umbrae* (1646). At days of intense heat and still wind, looking offshore from Reggio (Calabria), over the horizon one could observe a disturbing visual marvel in which he notices that “castellorum ordinatissimè dispositorum architectura: palatiorum, aedificiorumque ad omnes perspectivae regulas infinito columnarum

ordine projectorum mira quaedam magnificentia; in eorum paulatim evanescentium locum succedente Scena catoptrica[the architecture of the citadels is very ordered in its arrangement: a certain magnificence appears in the palaces and buildings, numberless, the columns, the order of the projections, for all follow rules of perspective; gradually, in them disappearing from the place, a catoptric scene follows.]”⁷⁷ The vision later unfolds in a more ‘picturesque’ panorama of fields, shepherds with flocks and groups of trees. It seemed the Tuscan-idyll-kind-of-scenery floating over the horizon was already strange enough. However, despite of the landscape of Italy being continuously dotted with villas, what is striking in the mirage is not the pastoral second part, but the urban description of its first appearance. A fascinating allure that continues the text quoting a letter from an informant that witnessed the phenomenon with naked eyes, on the feast day of the Assumption of Our Lady, 1643, in which the waters of the stretch became still as a mirroring surface.

“In questo Specchio comparve subito di colore chiaro oscuro una fila di più di 1000 Pilastrì d’uguale larghezza, & altezza, tutti equidistanti, e di un medesimo vivissimo chiarore, come di una medesima ombratura erano gli sfondati frà pilastro e pilastro. In un momento poi i pilastri si smezzarono d’altezza, e si arcuarono in forma di cotesti aquedotti di Roma, ò delle sustruttioni di Salomone; e restò semplice specchio il resto dell’acqua, sino all’acqua ammontonata di Sicilia: mà per poco, che tosto sopra l’arcata si formò un gran cornicione: frà poco sopra del cornicione si formarono castelli reali in quantità, disposti in quella vastissima piazza di vetro, e tutti di una forma, e lavoro: frà poco, delli castelli rimasero quantità di torri tutte uguali: frà poco le torri si cambiarono in teatro di colonnati: frà poco il teatro si stese, e fecene una doppia fuga: frà poco la fuga de’ colonnati diuentò lunghissima facciata di fenestre in dieci fila: della facciata si fè varietà di selve di pini, e cipressi eguali, e d’altre varietà d’arbori. E qui il tutto disparue, e’l mare con un poco di vento ritornò mare. / Questa è quella Fata Morgana, che ventisei anni ho stimata inverisimile, & hora ho visto vera, e piu bella di quel che mi si dipinse.

[In this mirror, suddenly appeared in chiaro oscuro, a row 511

tuum civilium, schismaticum, bellorum, ceterarumque calamitatum prænuntia. Secundò, varias impressiones meteorologicas, cometas *variis* trahentes, cruces, aliasque figuras multiformes, halones, parrelia, capreas saltantes, stellas cadentes, similiaque; de quibus in meteorologicis tractatur. Tertio, natura subinde admirabili quodam lucis temperamento, veluti varia colorum mixtura, & temperamento, in aëreis speculis tanta industria diversissima rerum simulacra depingit, ut nulla ars humana, nulla industria eo perungere posse videatur. Et de Iride quidem mirifico pingentis naturæ opificio, satis superque in primo libro dictum est. Restat, ut de duobus modis, quorum primo Naturæ omnis generis perfectè, & omnibus numeris absolutissimas imagines in aëre certis locis temporibusque depingere solet. Secundò, quomodo eadem præruptis montium præcipitiis, sylvarum anfractibus, ac denique in animalibus, plantis, lapidibus efformare soleat, videamus. Sit igitur.

Paraltasis I. Naturæ.

Sive de Morgana Rheginorum in Fretò Mamertino, sive Siculo.

EO maxime tempore, quo ardentissimus Sol æstu fervoribusque Mare Mamertinum concoquit, natura inexhaustas quosque pictoriæ suppellectilis suæ divitias aperiens, ei præcipue maris tractui, quæ Rhegio, vetusto non minus, quam veterum Philosophorum Lycæi Academicis, que cum primis celebri Calabriz oppidæ, subinde spectandas exponit. Contingit enim, ut memorato tempore de repente theatrum quoddam in vaporoso aëre sese aperiat, tanta rerum varietate adornatum, tanto scenarum apparatu, ut nihil ferè ibi sit, quod non se spectandum exhibeat: castellorum ordinatissimè dispositorum architectura: palatiorum, ædificiorumque ad omnes Perspectivæ regulas infinito columnarum ordine projectorum mira quædam magnificentiæ; in eorum paulatim evanescentium locum succedente Scena catoptrica. Videas hic umbrosos sylvarum tractus, Cypressorum, aliarumque arborum in quincuncem mira serie dispositarum ordines, campos immissos hominum turmis, bovm, armentis, oviumque gregibus refertos; omnia tanta colorum varietate, tam artificiosa Lucis & Umbra mixtura, tam vivis gestibus; ut nihil humana industria simile producere possit videatur. Vocant autem Rhegini hoc spectaculum Morganam. Et cum hæc

res paucis nota sit, eam hoc loco pertrahendam suscipio.

Ego sanè cum anno 1636. Messanam transiens multa de prodigiosa huiusmodi paraltasi, admiratione sanè dignissima intellexissem, ut rei veritatem propriis comperirem, Rhegium me contuli: ubi multi de peritioribus oppidi incolis circa hoc naturæ miraculum consulti, omnes ita sese rem habere, ut referri audieram, affirmarunt. Ut quoque solidius circa naturæ prodigium tam admirabile philosopharer, sicut loci, naturam terræ, vaporem maris, summa diligentia observandum duxi: quibus quidem facile in tam reconditorum effectuum causam, ut postea dicitur, deveni. Verum, ut prodigium maiori certitudine affirmetur, apponam hic literas cuiusdam de nostris Patribus, qui huiusmodi speculaculæ naturæ in epistola quadam ad Leonem Sanctum Societatis nostræ, virum sanè indequaque eruditissimum, & pro tempore in Romano Collegio Studiorum altiorum Præfecto data, ad longum describit.

Molto Reverendo in Christo Padre.
Pax Christi.

LA mattina dell' Assunzione della Beatis-
sima Vergine, standomi solo alla finestra, *risposta al*
ciddi cospicente, e tanto nuoce che di ripensar- *P. Leonem*
lo non mai fario, affanico. Parmi, che la *Sanctum*
Madonna Simeissima faresse comparire in que- *de Morgana*
sto Faro, un consiglio di Paradi: quel di, che *et Leonem*
essa vi entrò. Che se ancor l'occhio la sà ha, *et Leonem*
come l'Intelletto, lo specchio volentario, qua- *et Leonem*
reggia ciò che gli piace: quel che ho visto, po- *et Leonem*
sto chiamarlo specchio di quella specchia. Il *et Leonem*
Mare, che bagna la Sicilia si gonfiò, e diven- *et Leonem*
tò per dieci miglia in circa di lunghezza, come *et Leonem*
una spina dimontagna nera: e questo della Ca- *et Leonem*
labria spianò, e comparve in un momento una *et Leonem*
cristallo chiarissimo, e trasparente che pareva *et Leonem*
uno specchio, che con la cima appoggiò su *et Leonem*
quella montagna di acqua, e col piede al Lido *et Leonem*
di Calabria. In questo Specchio comparve subi- *et Leonem*
to di colore chiaro oscuro una fila di più di *et Leonem*
10000. Pilastri di uguale larghezza, et alter- *et Leonem*
za, tutti equistillanti, e di un medesimo ve- *et Leonem*
cessimo chiarore, come di una medesima on- *et Leonem*
bratura erano gli sfondati fra pilastri e pila- *et Leonem*
stro. In un momento poi i pilastri si smezza- *et Leonem*
ro d'altezza, e si arcuarono in forma di cote- *et Leonem*
sti aguedotti di Roma, o delle istrutture di *et Leonem*
Salone: e restò sempre specchio il resto dell' *et Leonem*
acqua, sino all' acqua ammonitona di Sicilia: *et Leonem*
ma per poco, che tosto sopra l'arcata si formò *et Leonem*
un gran cornicione: fra poco sopra dal corni- *et Leonem*
cione si formarono castelli reali in quantità, *et Leonem*
disposti in quella vastissima piazza di vetro, *et Leonem*
e tutti

e tutti di una forma, e lavoro: fra poco, del-
li castelli rimasero quantità di torri tutte ugua-
li: fra poco le torri si cambiarono in teatro di
colonnati: fra poco il teatro si stese, e fecene
una doppia fuga: fra poco la fuga de' colonna-
ti diventò lunghissima facciata di fenestre in
dieci fila: della facciata si fe' varietà di selus
di joni, e cipressi eguali, e d'altre varietà
d'arbori. E qui il tutto disparve, e'l mare con
un poco di vento ritornò mare.

Questa è quella Fata Morgana, che ven-
tisti anni ho stimata inverisimile, & hora ho
visto vera, e più bella di quel che mi si dipinse.
Di questa ho creduto, che sia vero, che soglia
apparire in vari colori ed anzi più voci, e
bella di questi non ha l'aria, e la natura per-
manente: perche chiaro oscuro, simile a questi
non viddi mai. Chi l'architetta, e chi l'abro-
fia, e con qual arte, e materia stampi in un pun-
to le varie, e tante magnificenze, desidero che
Vostre Reverenza me l'insegni, che vive fra le
vere magnificenze Romane, e contempla le ve-
rissime divine: mentre resto pergamole Idolo
sempre proprio, e raccomandandomi a' suoi
Santi Sacrificii.

Di Reggio 12. di Agosto 1643.

Scrive in Cinesia. Ignazio Angelacci.

Meminit hujus quoque prodigii Dama-
scius in vita Isidori Philosophi apud Pho-
tium. *Nostri tempestate narrarunt homines
bonae fidei, juxta Siciliam in campo nominato
Tetragyris, & in aliis non paucis locis, ceteri
equitum pugnantium simulacra: id, ut maxi-
mè essetis tempore, cum ardentissimus esset me-
ridies.*

Similia spectata Nerit interioris Apu-
liae Civitate, cujus hodie Episcopum agit
Illustrissimus ille Fabius Chisius, vir in
omnibus summus, & ad magna profus na-
tus, ingenio ad haec, & prudentia incom-
parabilis, Apostolicus dum haec scribo, in
Germania Nuncios. In hujus, inquam,
Dioeceseos Metropoli, similia naturae phan-
mata spectari, narrat Scipio Mazzellus in
descriptione Regni Neapolitani fol. 117.
his verbis. *Peri appressi si vede Salvo & Nar-
do, Città molto antica da Toluno detta Ne-
ritum, la quale è molto civile, ricca, e popola-
sa: dove si veggono spesso in aere sussando i
venti Australi, quasi uno specchio d'alcune
imagini di quelle cose, che sono all' intorno
il vulgo, che non conosce la causa, l'impulsa ad
illusione diabolica, o venenda all' incontro per
la disposizione del luogo, e vapori dell' aria,
che s'ingrossa per la soverchia humidità. Un-
che i grossi per la soverchia humidità. Un-
che di dici vix potest, quantum hoc phantaf-
ma parvaticum, & quam mirum in mo-
dum multorum torterit ingenium, dum
comprehendere nequeunt, quomodo res
in nube appareant, quae tamen nullis in vi-*

cinis campis apparent. Ego igitur, uti su-
pra dictum est, ut circa tam digni ostenti
abditas causas solidius philosopharer,
Rhegium me contuli, omnes phaenomeni
circumstantias cum situ loci, terrae, vapo-
rumque marini naturae, & proprietate confere-
rens, tandem causas detexi. Primò enim
observavi montem è regione Siciliae nomi-
ne Tinnæ maris, Rhegio oppositum, nigro
quodam tractu in Pelorum definitentem;
littora verò, uti & fundum maris, multam
glaream, five arenam ex selenite, antimo-
nio, vitro, aliaque materia pelluistri con-
statam, ex vicinis montibus dictis minera-
libus repletis devolvere, quae intensissimo
Solis calore, una cum vapore in sublime
exaltato, diversas & varias superficies con-
ficiat: haec crassioribus in nucleo vaporibus
montique oppositis, umbrolo tractu quasi
opacata, in speculum polyedrum omni-
bus numeris absolutissimum tandem coa-
lescant. In hoc igitur speculo varium ad
oculum suum habente, varia quoque re-
rum objectarum simulacra reflectuntur.
Columnarum artificiosa series contingit,
vel ex una columna in litore consistente,
quae in infinitam columnarum multitu-
dinem multiplici reflexione sua abit; eadem
prorsus ratione, qua vel unum simulacrum
inter duo specula recta sibi opposita infini-
tam intra dicta specula simulacrorum pror-
sus similitum multitudinem reflectere vi-
demus, uti in Magia Catoptrica fusiùs o-
stenditur. Ita unus homo variè intra spe-
culares nubium superficies saepiusque re-
flexus exercitum demonstrat. Idem de
arboribus, pectoribus, animalibus dicen-
dum. Cum verò columnis succedant alia
objecta, veluti arborum, castellorum, ani-
malium: causa est, quod cum oculis no-
ster ad diversâ speculares vaporis perpe-
tuo mobilis superficies diversimodè se
habeat, fiat ut juxta regulas angulorum
incidentiae, & reflexionis, res quoque di-
versae sub constituto angulo videantur, &
prout specularis vaporis superficies eas in
oculis reflexerit. Sed mirantur hoc loco,
quomodo specularis illa materia arenosa
elevetur. At hi mirari desinent, ubi vehe-
mentem attractionis vim, qua Sol dum va-
pores allicit, una secum diversas rerum ma-
teries in altum sublevarè solet, penitus
consideraverint. Quis nescit pilos, paleas,
arenulas, festucas, similesque quicquillas,
passim in grandine globosae reperiri? quae
sane manifestè indicia sunt, dictas res, una
cum vapore in aërem elevatas, ibidem
vapore resolutis commixtas, deinde vi
frigoris concreto, denudò in terram de-
scendisse. Si verum est, quod Meteorolo-
gi referunt, quandoque saxis, lignis, fer-
ro,

Causa spe-
culi aëris,
quod Mar-
tiano vo-
cant.

of more than a thousand equidistant columns of same length and height. The gap/shading[ombratura] between column and column was of the same vivid light, like the same shade. All of the sudden, the pillars were vertically cut in half[smezzarono] and bent in form of arches, like the aqueducts in Rome, or the constructions of Salomon; the rest of the water remained like a simple mirror, up to the accumulated waters of Sicily: but not for long, quickly a great cornice was formed over the arcade: soon, over the cornice real castles in quantity were formed, arranged in that vast glass piazza, all in one form and making: soon, an amount of identical towers remained from the castles: soon, the towers changed into a theatre of colonnades: soon, the theatre spread out and made a perspective of two vanishing-points: soon, the vanishing point of the colonnade gave way to a very long facade with ten rows of windows: the facade becomes a forest of pines, identical cypresses, and other variety of trees. And then everything vanishes, and the sea with a soft wind returns to be the sea. / This is the Fata Morgana, for twenty-six years unbelievable for me, and now I have seen it veridic, and more beautiful than what I thought.]”⁸

It is the Fata Morgana that unfolds like an architectural treatise in the sky. An unstable architectural marvel that metamorphoses inexplicably. Kircher notices the name given by the locals, “spectaculum Morganam”, the vision/wonder of Morgana. In the Sicilian sailors’ mythology, it was Morgan le Fay who was distantly sending her enchantments in the form of citadels that would lead the seafarers astray. Unfortunately, he didn’t provide illustration of the phenomenon, as he does with many others in his *Ars magna lucis et umbrae*, a treatise on optics, particularly known for his discussion of the magic lantern (Fig. 5). However, the oddity of the Fata Morgana seems in consonance with Kircher’s further enquires – the subterranean world, forgotten languages, musical machines, development of species after Noah’s Ark... – a fascination with phenomena that remained outside the explanations of early modern sciences. His engagement with Africa was not as emphatic as other travellers we have seen; however, he did

have a fascination for Ancient Egypt, and somehow his research on scientific extravaganzas was allusive to the way he saw their civilisation as veritable knowledge – *prisca sapientia* – secluded from the moderns by encryption⁹. The whole of Egypt was a hieroglyph. It is in this sense that Kircher and Raymond Roussel coincide; not only in a gusto for describing surrealist phantasmagorias – even André Breton wrote a short story titled *Fata Morgana*¹⁰ – but in their conveying Africa as encrypted knowledge.

Kircher was only able to describe the phenomenon. It was a sign yet to be deciphered. However, he pointed it to be a “catoptric scene” – that is, belonging to the branch of optics that deals with light being reflected in mirrors or other bouncing surfaces. This taxonomy was followed by successive opticians, up to our second Jesuit brother. It was Tobias Gruber (1744-1806), aided by his brother – and later general superior of the Society – Gabriel Gruber (1740-1805), who became, even as strangely as it may sound, the first one successfully replicating the phenomena in a laboratory¹¹. However, it was not until some years later, with the research of our third Jesuit¹², that the Fata Morgana was fully explained. It was Joseph Maria Pernter (1848-1908), a meteorologist working in Austria, whose research was not restricted to nephology – having translated Ralph Abercromby’s 1888 *The Weather* – but also included meteorological optics. The great breakthrough in decoding the optical illusion was in not thinking of the special mirage in Kircherian terms – in other words, geometrical optics – but in cloud-related ones – atmospheric optics¹³. The trick was in conceiving the rays of sunlight crossing the sky not as linear trajectories but as following the behaviour of wave-fronts propagating through the atmosphere. In his explanation, the phenomenon of Fata Morgana occurs when layers of hot air – think of a windless day in the desert – accumulate in higher parts and the cooler air remains in the layers closer to the surface – the sea being the most common surface, however, occurring also in the desert. What this layering produces is the rerouting of the rays that traverse now in curved paths. When the degree of the curvature becomes higher than the curvature of

(previous page)

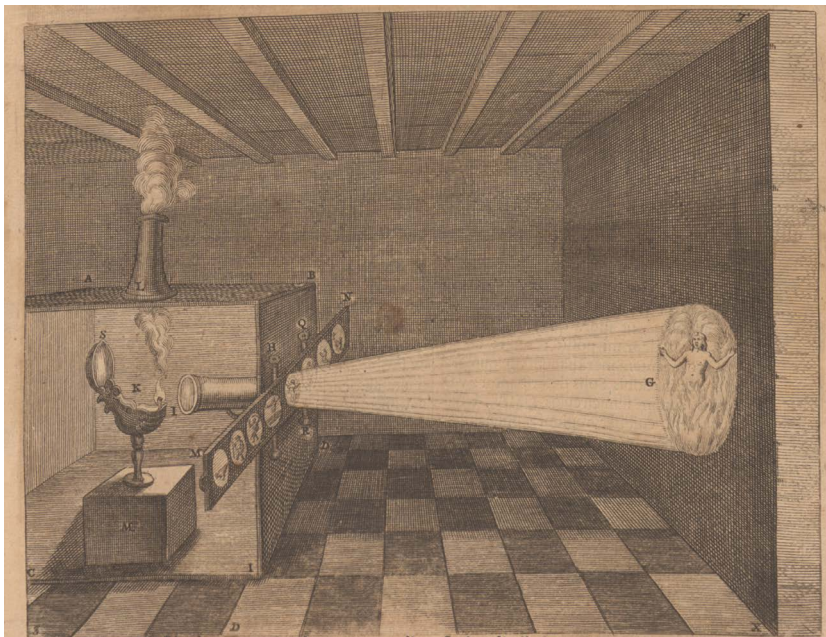
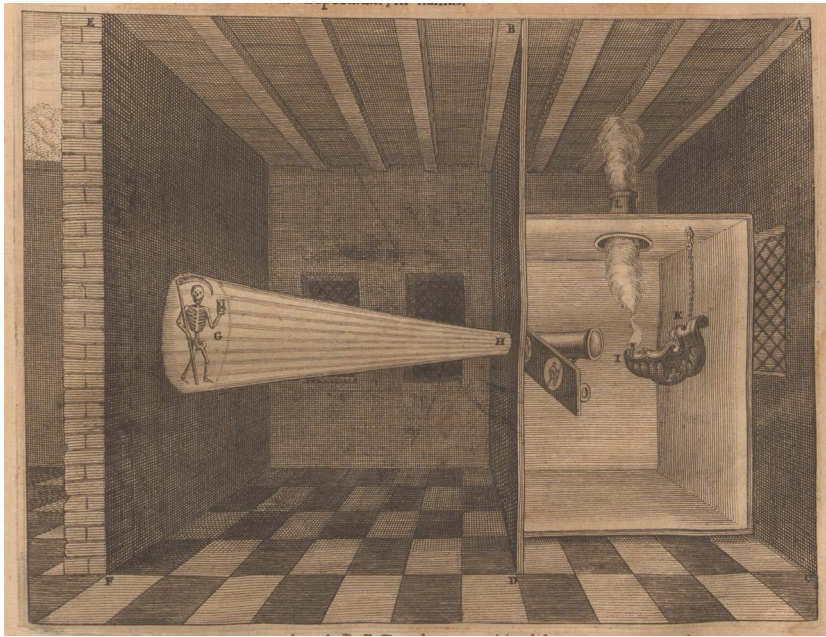
Fig. 4- Kircher, Athanasius. *Ars magna lucis et umbrae : in decem libros digesta ; quibus admirandae lucis et umbrae in mundo...*1671.

Amsterdam,

Joannen

Jannsonium. Book X, Part II. p. 704-705.





the earth, classical perspectival optic recesses, projecting elements that are beyond the limits of the vanishing point, elements beyond the horizon. The fairy castles described by Kircher were not sent by Morgan, but simply cities laying behind the horizon line.

The phenomenon was also illustrated in Dr. Georg Hartwig's *The Aerial World* (1874). Though he departed from the descriptions of Humboldt in the bay of Caracas, he also relied in Kircherian accounts in Messina¹⁴, but it's in the Sahara where he affirms the phenomenon is more striking. "*Bacher el Afrid* (the sea of the devil) is frequently alluded to in Oriental poetry, which derived a rich source of inspiration from the natural phenomena of the desert. 'The works of the unbelievers,' says the Koran, 'are like the Serab; the thirsty traveller mistakes them for water, until he approaches and finds that it is nought.'"¹⁵ What is appealing in Hartwig's etching is the sheer continuity between a camel-life aridity in the ground and a tropical abundance in the sky (Fig. 6). An overlapping that is more consummate, more complete in that they are undifferentiated in Werner Herzog's 'realistic' actual shots of the phenomenon in his fictional documentary *Fata Morgana* (1971) – a film that, coincidentally, also features images of the Bandiagara cliff of the Dogon. There, actual desert and optical illusion are intertwined, eradicating their differences (Fig. 7). A twenty-eight years old Herzog that lets himself be tricked by an 'unreal' Africa.

"The vehicle seems to be almost floating on water, and it looks as if the people are gliding alone. We filmed much of *Fata Morgana* in the afternoon, when the heat – which that day was truly beyond belief – creates a strange hallucinatory quality. We were extremely thirsty and knew some of the buses had supplies of ice and cooled water on board, so immediately after filming we all rushed over there. From a distance the bus looked as if it were no more than a mile away, but we couldn't find a single trace of anything. No tyre tracks, no tracks at all. There was nothing there, nor had there ever been anything there, and yet we had been able to film it. There must have been a bus somewhere – maybe twenty or a hundred or three hundred miles away – which was visible to us because of the heated strata of air that

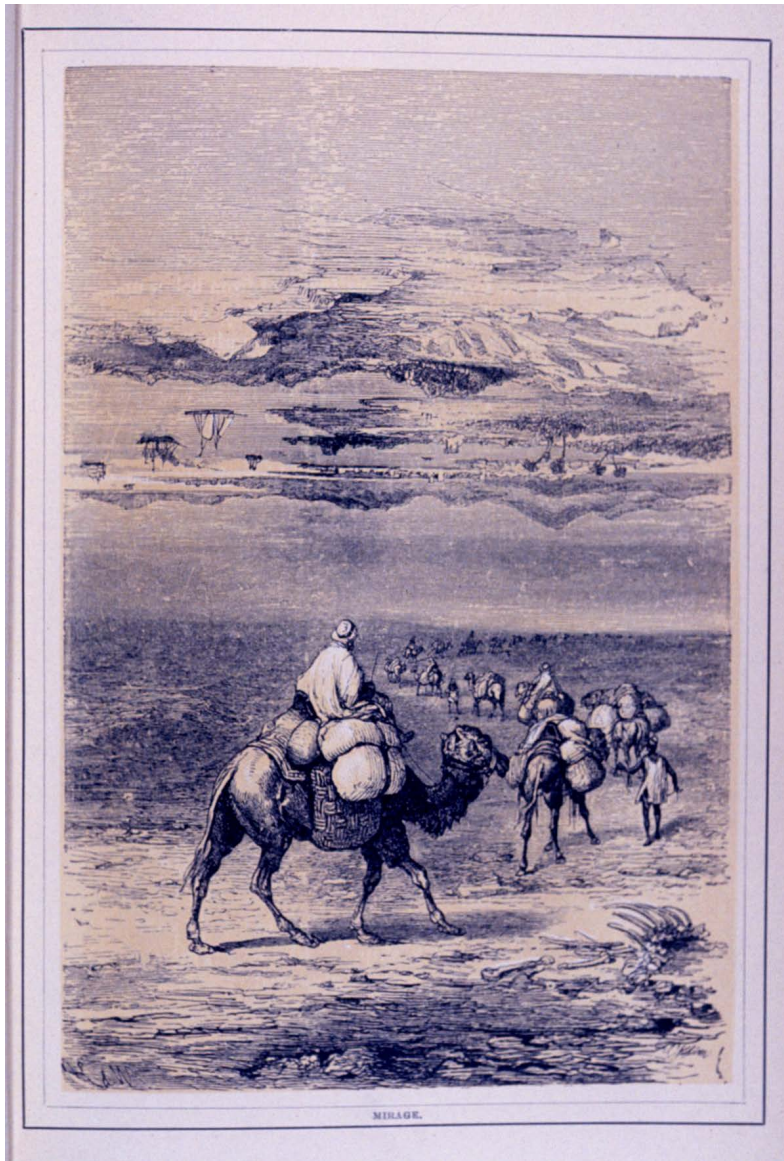


Fig. 6- Hartwig, Georg, *Mirage*. 1874 in Hartwig, Georg. 1874.

(previous page)
Fig. 5- Kircher,
Athanasius.

a.
Frontispiece.

b. Magic Lantern
in *Ars magna
lucis et umbrae : in
decem libros digesta
; quibus admirandae
lucis et umbrae in
mundo...*1646.
Rome, Hermanni
Scheus.

c. Magic Lantern as
shown in *Ars magna
lucis et umbrae : in
decem libros digesta
; quibus admirandae
lucis et umbrae in
mundo...*1671.
Amsterdam,
Joannen
Janssonium

reflected the image of the vehicle.”¹⁶

It is that daydreaming quality of a far-distant object brought to contemplation in the desert that made it so appealing for the desert-architects. They were literal castles in the air, however, further more instrumental than illusionary in the thinking of the modern metropolis. There was indeed an interest in the obsession of finding a city in the ‘empty quarter’.

What the Fata Morgana story of the Jesuit trinity discloses is four relevant aspects of the European fascination for the desert-city. First, the desert-city is logically defined, as opposed to the oniric insistence of the Surrealists for conceiving it as projection of the subconscious into the landscape, the mirage is an illusion rigorously constructed. It cannot only be described, but reproduced into an interior and explained scientifically. An argument sustained by Salvador Dalí with regards the writings of Raymond Roussel and his “rigorous logic of fantasy”. The African imaginary of the French writer, rather than fruit of suppressed reason or automatic writing was very much a conscious systematisation. Similar to Griuale’s strict scientific perspective in



dealing with the other, Roussel’s imaginary was a product of a clear logic. Its most appealing aspect is the coherence of its nonsense. An evidence of how the African ‘other knowledge’ was handled. It was laying beyond Modern forms of thinking, nonetheless subjected to be systematised. However, as opposed to ethnology – arguably the



Fig. 7- Herzog, Werner. *Fata Morgana*. 1971.

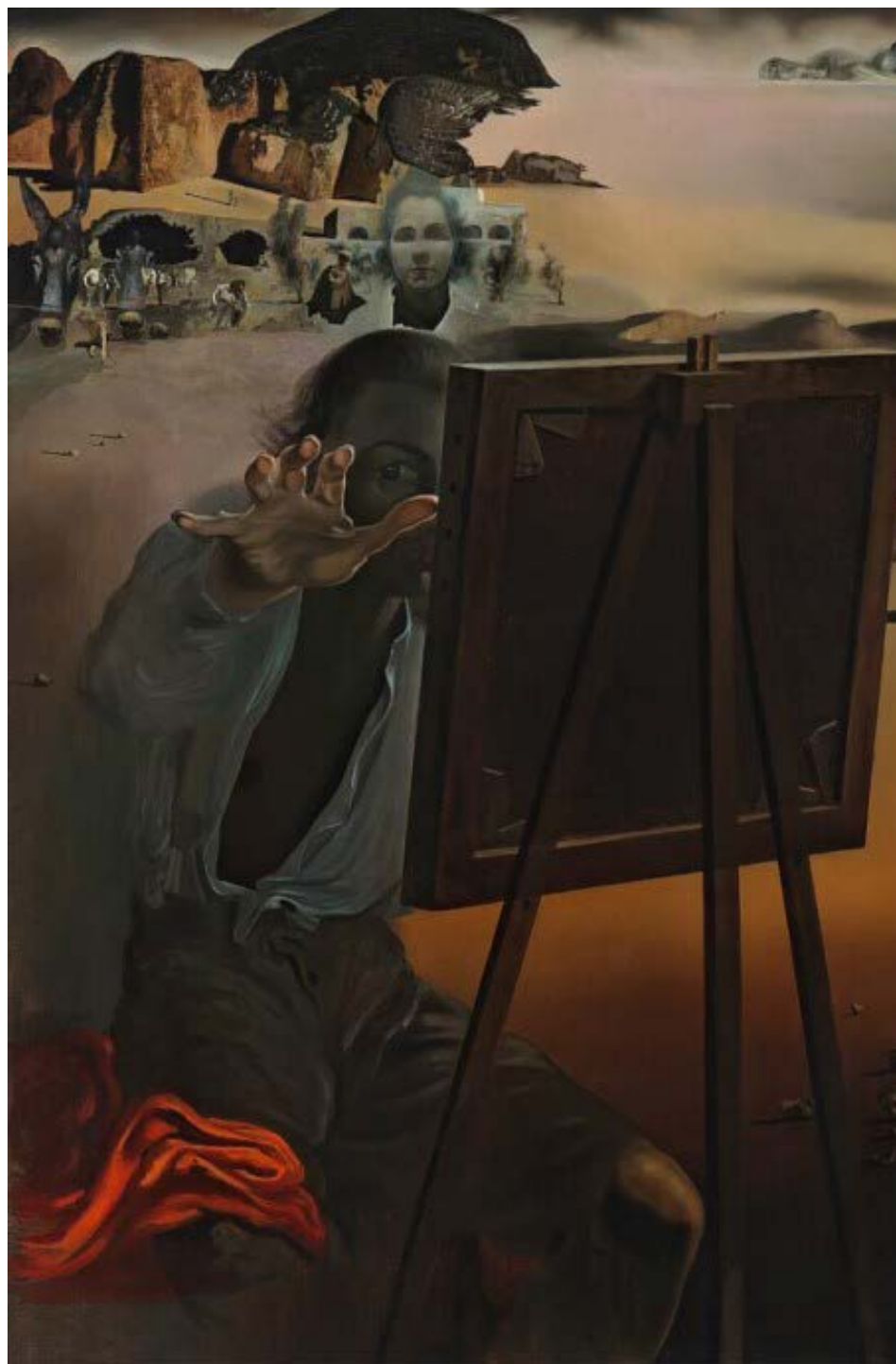
paradigmatic form of dealing with that ‘other knowledge’ – Roussel, Dalí or Leiris’s peculiar knowledge had an intention of keeping the illusion. As in Foucault’s reading of Roussel, revealing its logic was also a mechanism of seclusion, of maintaining its otherness despite it being controlled.

Second, the desert-city recedes as you approach it. Regardless of van Eyck’s and Koolhaas’s insistence of it being the ‘object we are catching up with’, it can only remain as a vanishing point. The desert-city disappears if you attempt to disclose the illusion. Rather, like Herman Haan, Jean Rouch and Saint-Exupéry, it functions by immersion, by letting oneself be tricked. Internalising it – making it one’s own interior – is the only way for its perpetuation.

Third, and most crucially, the desert-city is a city in reverse. Despite their search for an exterior to the city of the CIAM – van Eyck –, to the nineteenth century metropolis – Le Corbusier –, to the Paris of revolution – Maxime du Camp –, the desert-city is fundamentally a modern metropolis in reverse. Their revelations in the desert are mirror images of their cities back-home. Here it would be instrumental to recall certain misunderstandings in the reading of Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*. It is common to hear the interpretation that, through cities of the travel book, Calvino’s Marco Polo is describing his native Venice. He is not. Polo is describing the cities of Diomira, Dorothea, Zaira, Zora, Despina...though by means of them he is talking about Venice. In the case of van Eyck, Le Corbusier, Bagnold, Koolhaas, or Malraux, they are describing the Dogon villages, Ghardaïa, Zorzura, Lagos and Sheba, yet through them it is the modern metropolis they are talking about. One thing is the description, another the object of their speech. Yes, to a certain degree, Nietzsche was right. The desert was a place where to contemplate from without. However, he was wrong in the object of contemplation. The curvature of the rays of light make present the city that the traveller thought tamed, secluded beyond the horizon. It brings it back into the foreground. It is best to consider this special mirage as a peculiar manifestation of the double. The Fata Morgana is another form in which the modern metropolis

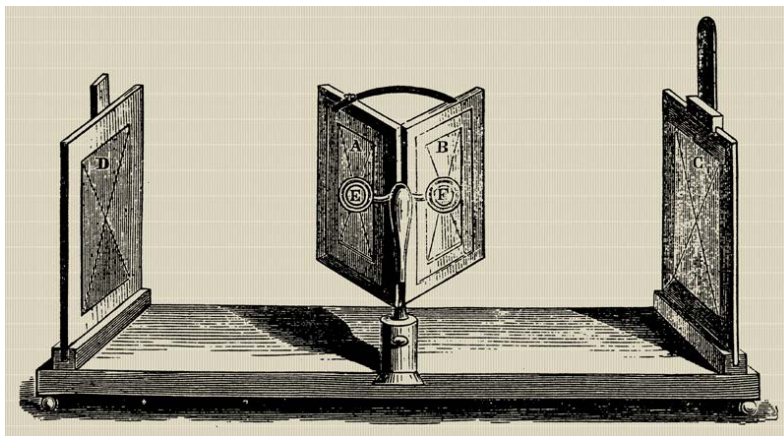
reveals its uncanniness, arguably more paradigmatic than the Freudian *doppelgänger* – the double – in that in the Morgan version, the familiar/homely aspect becomes eerier because of the desert setting. For the figure of the double that Freud considers in *The Uncanny* (1919)¹⁷ it is all a question of psychologic projection of the self. In his analysis, the double develops a reversal movement. What primitively was a mechanism for perpetuating life – the double was an externalisation of the self into amulets, dolls, and guardian spirits – paradoxically turns into a life-threatening element. “[H]aving once been an assurance of immortality, [it] becomes the uncanny harbinger of death.”¹⁸ In the Fata Morgana it’s all in reverse. Its uncanniness is not spooky, but rather an enigmatic aspect that generates attraction. The cryptograph of Kircher or Roussel does not generate repulsion but certain allure in attempting its decipherment. It is in reverse to the harbinger of death in that it was originally intended as a critical stance towards the metropolis and what it ultimately achieves is its perpetuation. It is the Other that the traveller to the desert departs in search for what eventually becomes incorporated into the modern metropolis in the form of desert-city upon his return.

Fourth, this incorporation is prompted by the Fata Morgana due to its hybrid nature. In its ‘purest’ form, the Fata Morgana is a hybrid, which disables the difference between reality and illusion; desert and city merge. Salvador Dalí depicted the desert as locus of double-images. This was present precisely in his *Impressions of Africa* (1938), tribute to Raymond Roussel’s book (Fig. 8a). Dalí plays with two images: the ‘real’ landscape, and the image constructed on top of it. These two realms are not split, but compose a series of mirage-like double images. The desert is populated by oneiric depictions that are both themselves and something else. On the upper left, the arcades of a vernacular building construct the eyes of his muse Gala; two clerics define the head of mules; and a dead partridge is a bird, a rock and a coastline¹⁹. Similarly, to the upper right side a group of Murillesque folkloric characters form the outline of a ghastly skull²⁰. In fact, the spatial construction through double images was a topos throughout





Dalí's oeuvre²¹. What is more explicit in *Impressions d'Afrique* is the connection between the desert-like landscape and the double vision. In this case the double image does not belong to the overlapping of figure and background, but to the ground itself. At the centre of the canvas, the outline of three dunes define a ground without horizon, smoothly extended by a soft sand desert, which overlaps these two different landscapes. If the double images had something to do with Roussel's work, the desert as its locus was something that Dalí further explored. It's more evident in his *Batalla en las nubes (Obra estereoscópica)* [Battle in the Clouds (Stereoscopic Work)] (1979), a work he developed with the American physicist Roger de Montebello, departing from the research on stereoscopy initiated by Charles Wheatstone. A technique of vision that, as we saw, fascinated Pierre Loti. Wheatstone's instrument constructs illusion of depth by presenting each half of the painting to one of the eyes through mirrors located at 45° (Fig. 8b). The simultaneity of vision reconstructed an image of solidity in the depicted object. In Dalí's double painting (Fig. 9), the foreground presents his muse Gala facing the sky in a desert landscape. Over the horizon, one half is painted in a rose gradient that contrast vividly with the cerulean tone of the right-half. Floating in the air, the armies of Constantine charge in the struggle against Maxentius's troops that are crossing the Milvian Bridge – a literal transposition of Giulio Romano's fresco in the Apostolic palace of the Vatican²². It is only paradoxical that the Fata Morgana was to blend again a mixture of Western and Oriental signs. In Dalí's painting observed through a stereoscopic device, the cloudless and the warmongering skies overlap in front of the contemplating Gala. What his stereoscopic painting does is to show the mirage as a phenomenon of hybridity. Like van Eyck's seeing the images of the Otterlo Circles simultaneously – “I can't separate them any more, I simply can't” – Le Corbusier's *femme à la licorne*, or Loti's fascination with stereoscopic identity, hybridity was an element that enabled the incorporation of the other back into the modern discourse. Though conceived laying beyond the limits of knowledge, vision and identity, they were finally managed within



(previous
page)

Fig. 8a- Dalí,
Salvador. *Impressions
d'Afrique*. 1938.
Ref. 462 Catalogue
Raisonné.
©Museum Boijmans
van Beuningen,
Rotterdam.

Fig. 8b- Wheatstone, Charles, *The Wheatstone mirror*.
c.1840.





Western thought. It was the encounter with the desert-city in the form of mirage that eradicated the otherness of the Other, bringing it back home in a hybrid form. That condition of contemplating the Fata Morgana as overlapping the emptiness of the exterior and the mirror image of the home is what condenses the experience of the traveller in the desert. This is the way in which the desert as space 'beyond' is better rendered in its French '*au-delà*', here-and-there, hither-and-thither. It was not anymore a question of escaping as much as that of contemplating simultaneously, giving room to incorporating, absorbing; "Architecture breathing-in", bringing in to the interior what used to remain outside.

Endnotes

1. Thesiger, Wilfred. *Arabian Sands*. 1959. London, Longmans. p. xiii.
2. Ibid., p. 310.
3. Thesiger, Wilfred. *Across the Empty Quarter* in *The Geographical Journal*. Jan-Mar., 1948. Vol. 111. p. 18. (transcript of the Evening Meeting of the Society, 20 October 1947).
4. van Eyck, Aldo. 2008. p. 85.
5. cf. Koolhaas, Tomas. *REM* (documentary). 2016.
6. cf. Findlen, Paula(ed.). *Athanasius Kircher. The Last Man who Knew Everything*. 2004. New York. Routledge.
7. Kircher, Athanasius. *Ars magna lucis et umbrae : in decem libros digesta ; quibus admirandae lucis et umbrae in mundo...* 1646. Rome, Hermann Scheus. Book X, Part II. p. 800
8. Letter from Ignatio Angelucci to Athanasius Kircher in Kircher, Athanasius. 1646. p. 801.
9. cf. Findlen, Paula. *The Last Man who Knew Everything...or Did He? Athanasius Kircher, S.J.(1602-80) and His World* in Findlen, Paula(ed.). 2004. p. 32.
10. cf. Breton, André. *Fata Morgana*. 1969(1st French ed. 1940). Chicago, Black Swan Press.
11. cf. Juznics, Stanislav. *Euler and the Jesuits in Russia* in *Quaderns d'Història de l'Enginyeria*. 2008. Volume IX. pp. 219-247. As well as Gruber, Tobias. "Bemerkungen über H. Erasmus Darwins Folgerungen aus Versuchen auf die Erzeugung der Kälte durch die mechanische Ausdehnung der Luft u.s.w. in *Journal der Physik*. 1791 vol. 1, 73. and in *Gren's Journal der Physik*, vol. 3, 188-196.
12. Though in 1877 he was asked to leave the Society of Jesus due to health reasons.
13. cf. Pernter, Joseph M. *Meteorologische Optik, etc. (IV. Abschnitt ... von Felix M. Exner.)* 1902-10. Wein and Leipzig, Wilhelm Braumüller. As well as Pinney, Christopher. *The Waterless Sea: A Curious History of Mirages*. 2018. London. Reaktion Books.
14. cf. Hartwig, Georg. *The Aerial World; a popular account of the phenomena and life of the atmosphere, etc.* 1874. London. Longmans, Green and Co. p. 205.
15. Ibid. p. 208.
16. Cronin, Paul & Herzog, Werner. *Werner Herzog: a guide for the perplexed*. 2014. London. Faber & Faber. p. 60.
17. cf. Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. 2003. London. Penguin Classics. p. 141-151.
18. Ibid., p. 142.
19. cf. Whitfield, Sarah. *Dali's Optical Illusions. Hartford, Washington, and Edinburgh* in *The*

(previous page)
 Fig. 9- Dalí,
 Salvador. *Batalla
 en las nubes (Obra
 estereoscópica)*
 [Battle in
 the Clouds
 (Stereoscopic
 Work)]. 1979.
 100 x 100
 cm(each part)
 ©Museo Reina
 Sofía.

Burlington Magazine. 2000. Vol. 142. pp. 518-519.

20. See Dalí, Salvador. *Tête de mort atmosphérique sodomisant un piano à queue (Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Grand Piano)*, 1934 (Ref. 384. Catalogue Raisonné); Dalí, Salvador. *Crâne et son appendice lyrique s'appuyant sur une table de nuit qui aurait la température d'un nid de cardinal (Skull and Its Lyric Appendage Leaning on a Bedside Table which Should Have the Temperature of a Cardinal Nest)*, 1934 (Ref. 385. Catalogue Raisonné); and Dalí, Salvador. *Bureaucrate moyen atmosphérocéphale, dans l'attitude de traire du lait d'une harpe crânienne (Average Atmospheroccephalic Bureaucrat in the Act of Milking a Cranial Harp)* 1933 (Ref. 324. Catalogue Raisonné).

21. cf. Maddox, Conroy. 1979, as well as Whitfield, Sarah. 2000.

22. Presenting the battle of the Milvean Bridge suggest the pun that, in Dalí's version, we are missing the angels – the heavenly sign – that led the victory of the Cross, only characters populating Romano's Mannerist sky. But funny enough, the pun doesn't remain only in the miraculous event in the origin of Constantine's conversion to Christianity. Dalí's sky seems to go all the way back to Pliny the Elder, that in the same *Natural History* in which he described the victory of Parrhasius in the painting contest, some pages before he gave account of a Fata Morgana of a sort. "In the third consulship of Marius the inhabitants of Ameria and Tuder saw the spectacle of heavenly armies advancing from the East and the West to meet in battle, those from the West being routed. It has often been seen, and is not at all surprising, that the sky itself catches fire when the clouds have been set on fire by an exceptionally large flame." (Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History* (77-79 AD), Book II, section LVIII.)

Final Scene *The figure emerging from /
returning to the desert, Paris, 1957*

*You have sailed with a furious soul far from your father's house, beyond
the double rocks of the sea, and you live in a foreign land.*

Euripides' *Medea* as quoted in Camus, Albert. *Return to Tipasa*
(1953).

[*London, Sunday, 10 March 2019*]

On Sunday, March 10, 2019, I was packing for my journey. The thesis was not finished yet, it was missing the concluding lines. So, along with my desert gear, I needed room to pack ideas about endings. As Du Camp from his bureau, I was stocktaking narratives of previous travellers, looking through the window at a London that had little to do with where I was to depart. In running out of space, I started hesitating whether the deserts I have dealt with were enough. There was the risk of having missed the ‘actual desert’ when dealing only with its representations in the journeys of all these travellers. Flaubert had already expressed it nicely in his entry for the *Dictionary of Received Ideas*: “*Désert* – Produit des dattes. [*Desert* – Produces dates]”¹ The desert produces all sorts of ‘received ideas’ among its fruits. I had the impulse of giving away with representation and travelling lightweight – either for bringing my bag back replete with original ideas, or full of clichéd dates. My laptop was playing the canonical British desert-travelogue *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), with its concluding words “well, sir, going home...home, sir!”. Nostalgia is in the eyes of Peter O’Toole as his car leaves behind a group of camel riders covered in dark Arab garb (Fig. 1). It was actually an image that I had seen before in the famous scene of the Black Rider, that marks the entering of Lawrence in the desert (Fig. 2). The black figure emerges at the opening, vanishes at the end. Between the two points, the desert. As the credits were running down moving towards the loop starting back with the opening scene, the film suggested that there tends to be intriguing ideas mixed with old platitudes. The dictum in this case was: ‘Thinking of endings in the desert is almost naturally thinking of beginnings’. It had the solidity of a platitude, however, it contained ideas worth reflecting upon. Lawrence’s case has something of a constant in desert-travelogues. The end of a desert-travelogue is always a beginning. This is due to an ambivalent sense of ‘emergence’. The travelogue ends when the figure emerges from the desert. Covered in dust, the main character







Fig. 3- Rouch, Jean. *Cimetière dans la Falaise*. Opening Scene. 1950

Fig. 4- Rouch, Jean. *Cimetière dans la Falaise*. Final Scene. 1950

makes his way back home. However, the final scene is a return to the beginning, a point in which the figure emerges. There's always an exiting from and entering to the desert; this point coincides. It is the liminal moment in which the circle closes, the point of arrival coinciding with the point of departure.

It was a point of return that I had already watched in Jean Rouch's *Cimetière dans la Falaise* (1950) (Stop 5, Fig. 24). I just played the loop once again. A similar death as ending-and- new-beginning – Lawrence dies in the famous motorcycle crash just after the title sequence, in the very first scene of the film. In Rouch, the narrative culminates the burial ritual with the soul of the deceased being carried to the sources of life in the river (Fig. 3). The very waters that open the documentary (Fig. 4). I was not to do like Herman Haan, climbing desert cliffs in my designed gadget. However, my preparation for the travel was similar to Haan's, planning the journey from the paraphernalia of other travellers gathered in my room. Now I was watching the same narrative structure that Rouch proposed, this time in his *La chasse au lion à l'arc* (1965) [The Lion Hunters], that opens with his voice-over “Once the erg sand dunes are crossed, one can enter the *Ghanghi Kangamoru-Gamoru*[], ‘the bush that is further than far’, the Land of Nowhere...this is a land of sand, of dust and of mist. A land of trackless forests and mountains whose names are now forgotten. We call them the mountains of the moon and the crystal mountains... Nothing remains. However, men lived there a long time ago”; and ends with the death of the lioness in the deserts at the verges of the Land of Nowhere from where the camera withdraws. I was about to enter those lands, pondering what my conclusion was. In the end of the desert-travelogues there is always an open horizon, and a figure that vanishes as a new story is inchoate. The coda in the ‘Land of Nowhere’ is entering or exiting, depending where the camera is set up. It can always frame a face or a back. It is the face of Travis, and his back, in *Paris, Texas* (1984). Wim Wenders’ film opens with a canonical view of the desert, moving into a close up of the main character, only to immediately give us his back wandering in the desert (Fig.

(previous page)
Fig. 1- Lean,
David. *Lawrence
of Arabia*.
Final Scene.
1962

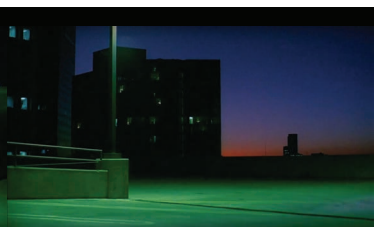
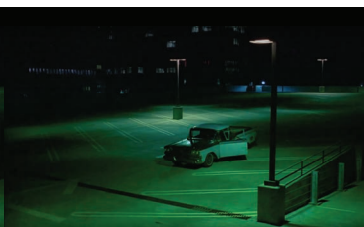
Fig. 2- Lean,
David. *Lawrence
of Arabia*. Black
Rider Scene.
1962

(following page)
Fig. 5- Rouch,
Jean. *La chasse
au lion à l'arc*.
Opening Scene.
1965

Fig. 6a- Wenders,
Wim. *Paris, Texas*.
Opening Scene.
1984

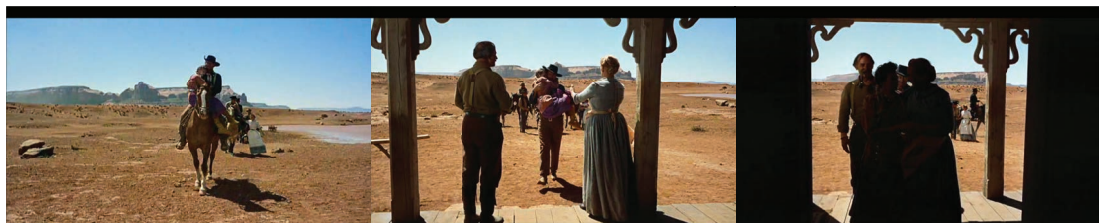
Fig. 6b-
Wenders, Wim.
Paris, Texas.
Final Scene.
1984

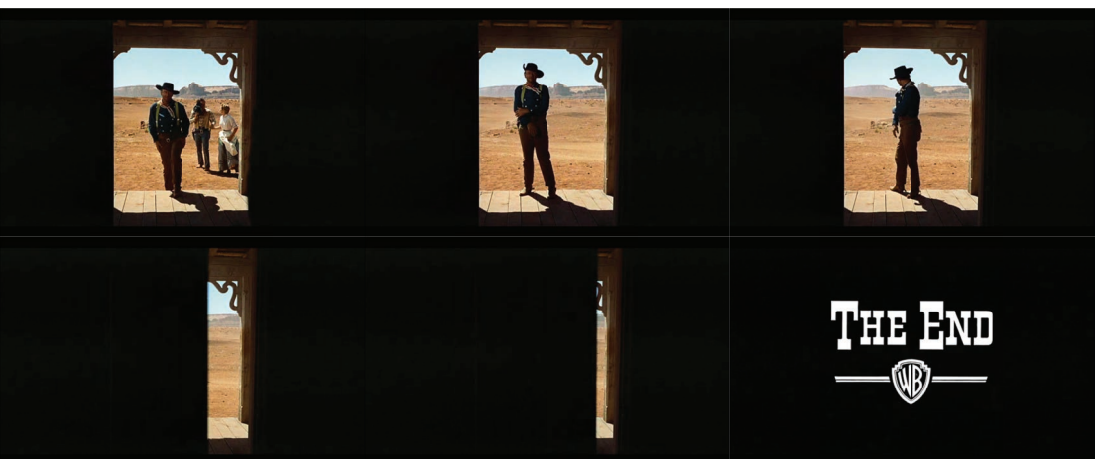






TEXAS 1868





6a). The end is its reverse. After having restored his broken family, he gives them his back, the camera following him back to the beginning, framing his face as he escapes the city (Fig. 6b). The final credits open the ambivalence of suggesting that there's always a Paris, that can be found in the desert.

Possibly the most paradigmatic desert-travelogue ending of all times is John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), in which literally the final shot mirrors the opening. The threshold of the door opens the film, with the loner cowboy returning home (Fig. 7a). The door closes the film, as the hero turns around and returns to the desert (Fig. 7b). The threshold is telling as closing symbol of desert-travelogue. The closing line is always a frame through which to look at the desert again.

This is not a unique feature of films. As a proto-cinematic frame, the frontispiece of literary texts also works as beginning, ending, and especially a form through which to look at the desert². In French, the frontispiece is called *seuil* – literally, 'threshold'³. It was a feature which was present in Maxime du Camp (Stop 1, Fig. 1), Emile Prisse d'Avennes (Excursus 1, Fig. 2), Gabor Naphegyi (Stop 3, Fig. 1) and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Stop 4, Fig. 2). Most clearly it is the case of Athanasius Kircher in the frontispiece of his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Fig. 8). It depicts himself as Oedipus in front of the Sphinx. The reader is received by a conversation between the two. This conversation frames the desert landscape at the back, with its monuments, palm trees and sand. Literally, the two figures form an arch through which to look at the landscape. The reader has to enter it, and the reader has to leave through it. But the remarkable aspect in this case, is that the frontispiece is a threshold in itself. Following the Greek myth, the Oedipal dialogue takes place at the outskirts of Thebes, the threshold of the city. This *seuil*, as the *desert*, mediates the relationship between the metropolis and its exteriors. It puts the dichotomy in suspension, reading their relation as a continuum. But, if this continuity is spatial – metropolis-exterior – it is furthermore temporal. Presented to the reader at its first page, the *seuil* abridges the entire work; that is, the *seuil* is threshold and door, as it bridges opening and closing. It is there,

(previous page)
Fig. 7a- Ford,
John. *The Searchers*.
Opening Scene.
1956

Fig. 7b- Ford,
John. *The Searchers*.
Final Scene.
1956

Fig. 8- Kircher, Athanasius. *Oedipus Aegyptiacus: frontispiece. Vol. 1.*
1652- 1654 © Cornell University Library



ATHANASII KIRCHERI E SOCIETATE IESV
OEDIPVS ÆGYPTIACVS
AD FERDINANDVM III CÆSAREM SEMPER AVGVSTVM.

where the end touches its beginning, not being clear if the desert is where the figure is emerging from or where it is moving to.

The desert-travelogue of this thesis ends in Paris. In October, 1957 Albert Camus was photographed by Loomis Dean for the article published in LIFE magazine on the 14th of the month – just three days before the official announcement of his being awarded the Nobel Prize of Literature. With a cigarette in his hand, Camus appears staring down at Rue Sebastien-Bottin from the roof terrace of the offices of Editions Gallimard (Fig.9). His gaze has certain character of the aloofness that the Swedish Academy of Literature praised in his writing⁴. He keeps a distance looking from above. However, Camus' Paris is not the one of Flaubert and Du Camp. They were locals. For Camus, Paris was not point of departure but of arrival – from his native Algeria. A place of which he wrote "Paris est souvent un désert pour le coeur [Paris is often a desert for the heart]"⁵ It was 1939 and he had just visited the metropolis for the first time the year before. His exile is on the main streets. His reading of the city is a reversal of the one a hundred years back. If the French couple looked for deserts outside the city, Camus was drifting at its centre.

"There are no more deserts, there are no more islands. Yet the need for them makes itself felt. If we are to understand the world, we must turn aside from it; if we are to serve men better, we must briefly hold them at a distance. But where can we find the solitude necessary to strength, the long breathing-space in which the mind can gather itself together and courage take stock of itself? We still have large towns."⁶

While the aim of keeping the city at bay, of generating a space of criticality, is similar in both Flaubert and Du Camp's and Camus' projects, the latter reverses the notion of the desert. It is not an exterior anymore, but rather belonging to the metropolis itself. "Descartes, for his meditations, chooses his desert: the busiest commercial city of his time."⁷ In his office, Camus is in a desert at the 7e arrondissement. His stand-up desk takes over Du Camp's bureau (Fig. 11). In an



Fig. 10- Dean, Loomis. One of the photographs of the series *Albert Camus*. 1957. Paris, France. Original ID: TimeLife_image_113624291. © Time Inc.

unpublished photo by L. Dean, the console table is presided by a portrait of Friedrich Nietzsche in his deathbed – one snap of the *Der kranke Nietzsche* [The ill Nietzsche] series that Hans Olde took during the summer of 1899 (fig. 10). Camus' 'Paris is a desert' closes up the circle started in Nietzsche. Nietzsche was our original frontispiece, Camus is the piece at the back. It is a Sisyphus dragging the load all the way from Africa. It is not the project of colonialism that brings the obelisk to Paris. It is rather the desert itself that he is carrying.

Nietzsche never visited the desert. However, Camus' 'Paris is a desert' makes us consider the desert differently. Not in the same way as in Nietzsche's project, an exterior to the metropolis; but rather as a mechanism that mediates the relationships between the metropolis and its exteriors. A tool that operates flips between them. I myself saw the reverses on my journey to North Africa. As a *seuil* closing the journey of the thesis, Camus' 'Paris-desert' expanded the scope of the thesis, not remaining in the roughly hundred years of my investigation, but rather the possibility of expanding it as a present condition. Finally I departed to the desert, with a sense that representation is not enough; however, considering that great journeys are on-site reflections of cliché ideas, I needed to go there. Like an empty-handed Sisyphus, I departed from the metropolis down to the desert.

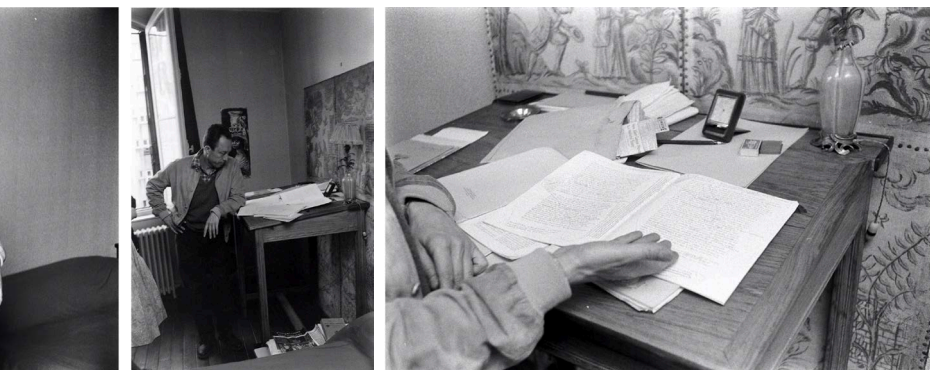


Fig. 11- Dean, Loomis. Images of the series *Albert Camus*. 1957. Paris, France. Original ID: TimeLife_image_113624304, 113624271, 113624302, 113624274, 113624301. © Time Inc.

[*El-Ateuf, Thursday, 14 March, 2019*]

The itinerary was given. Simply to trace back Le Corbusier's meridian line. While in the '30s he had to fly single-engine to the desert, nowadays you can make your way down the line from London in an Airbus A320 for about £200 return – with a short transfer at Algiers. One could argue that the technology makes different the whole of the experience. I would just simply say that from my aisle seat I missed Le Corbusier's paradigmatic sight. I didn't see the M'Zab until I was already inside it. The valley is a sudden depression, imperceptible from the roads that connect the airport through the plateau. Upon arrival to Ghardaïa, it was only a matter of finding my way by bus to El-Ateuf, oldest and remotest settlement of the pentapole M'Zab (Fig. 12). Any guide to the village will do for the tour, as any mozabite worth the name, as soon as you mention 'Je suis architecte', will point to you 'Mosquée Sidi-Brahim, le *Ronchamp* du le désert.' The mosque in question is a great piece of desert-architecture. Clearly, the plasticity of the forms and the dramatic sequence from darkness to light could have had some influence in the design of the French chapel. But what I was looking for was certain radical transition from building to desert, a sheer split between architecture and sand. A clear dichotomy that I had seen in the pictures of Manuelle Roche's publication, and that I reckoned would have made a strong echo in Le Corbusier's mind; the desert as a critical space outside of the metropolis (Fig. 13). However, on trying to capture the building in its desert environment there was something that was continuously stepping in within the frame (Fig. 14). At first, it was obvious the newly built decking fruit of UNESCO heritage protection, giving away any romantic notion of the limit of the city. No sandy ground from which the whitewashed walls rose. But beyond the decking, recessed in the background the desert was not the uninhabited pristine tabula rasa. Rather, the millennial rock formations were mixed with the undifferentiated rubble of an ongoing sidehill cut. This suggested a different understanding of the *edge*. It was not





الاسم واللقب حملاوي يحي
المقر الإجتماعي. حي المجاهدين بريان
رقم القيد. 47/710
نقل عمومي للمسافرين
رمز الخط. 472004

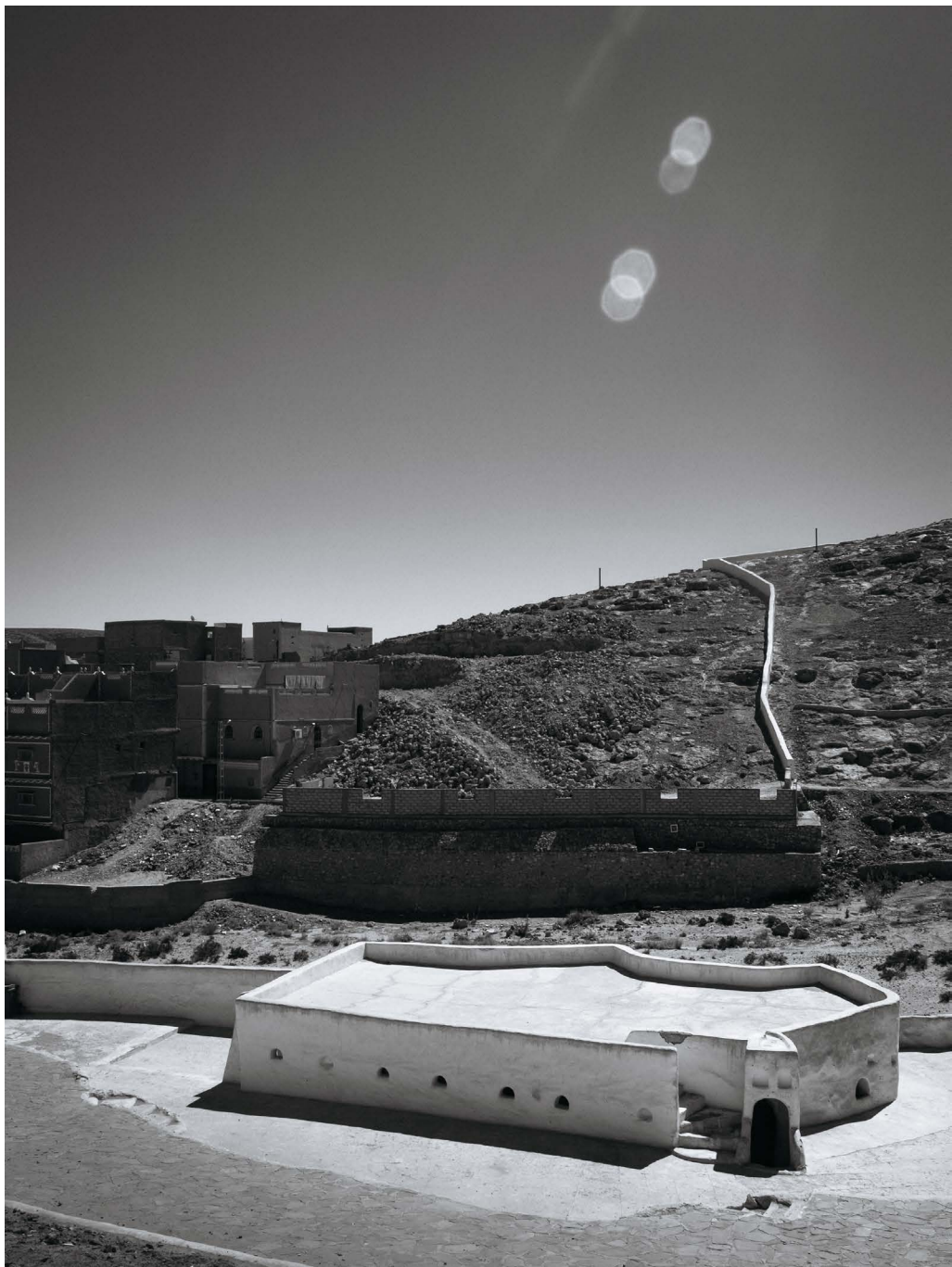


Fig. 13-Roche, Manuelle. *Le M'Zab. Architecture Ibadite en Algérie.*
1970. Paris, Arthaud. Illustrations 52-54

the abrupt limit between city and desert. It was the desert itself, a transition, a space with thickness. Like in the photographs of Maxime Du Camp, this funerary monument emerged from the unformed ground. In Du Camp's collection, the Nubian man had worked so well because it was one more colossal figure against the rocky backdrop. However, the question was not only in the figure, but precisely in the background. As the clearance works in the archaeological sites developed in Egypt along the second half of the 19th century, the desert was actually a mutable surface, in flux. Its thickness was not only spatial, but modifiable with time. In the M'Zab, the natural rock and the rock that was cut-through were contiguous and coetaneous. In other words, the architecture of the city-in-the-desert was not built as figure against the background. The desert was a thickened edge, both metaphorically and in a very physical sense. The verges of El-Ateuf were a desert in state of latency: both a ground secluded in the background waiting to be manifested, and an object waiting to unfold.

(previous page)
Fig. 12- *No title*.
Photograph
by the author.
2019

Fig. 14- *The mosque of Sidi Brahim, El-Atenf, Algeria.* Photograph
by the author. 2019



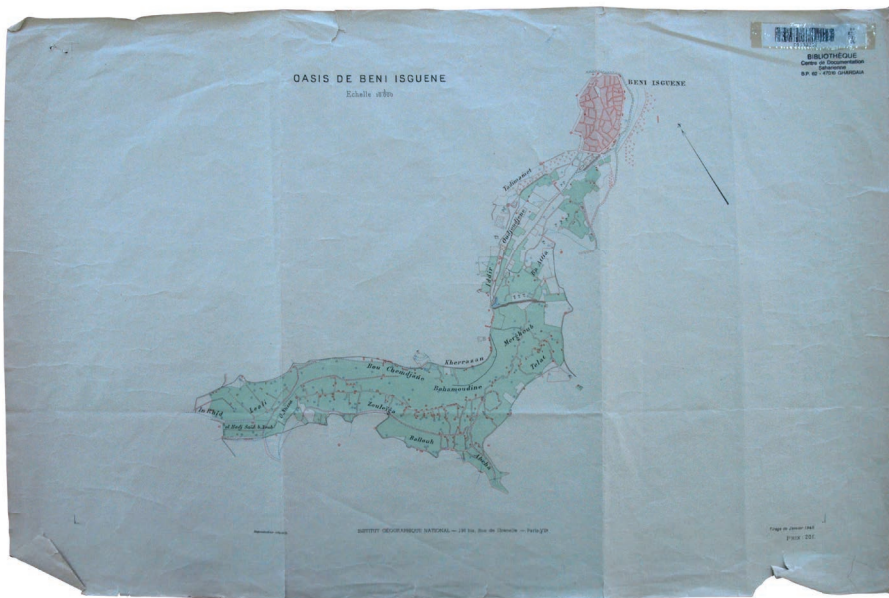
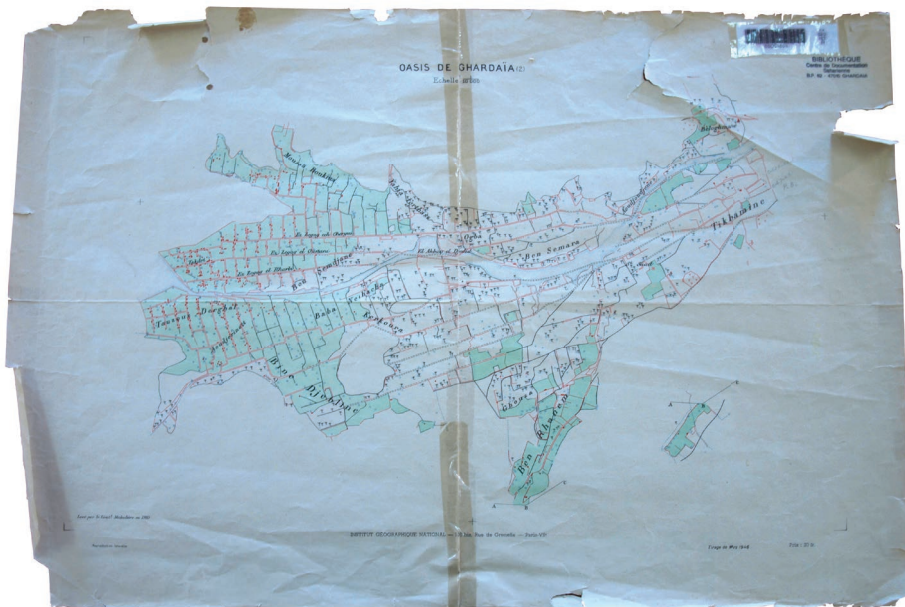
[*Ghardaia, Friday, 15 March, 2019*]

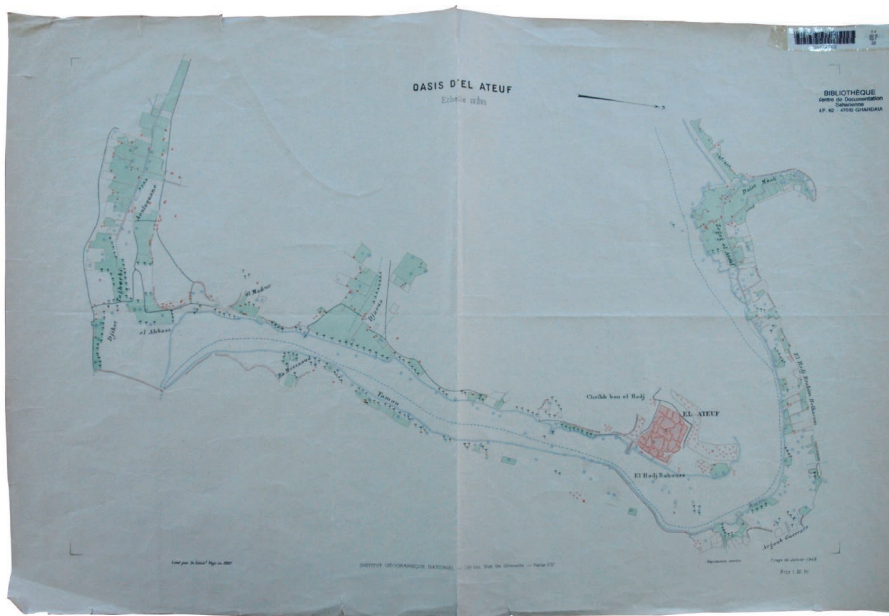
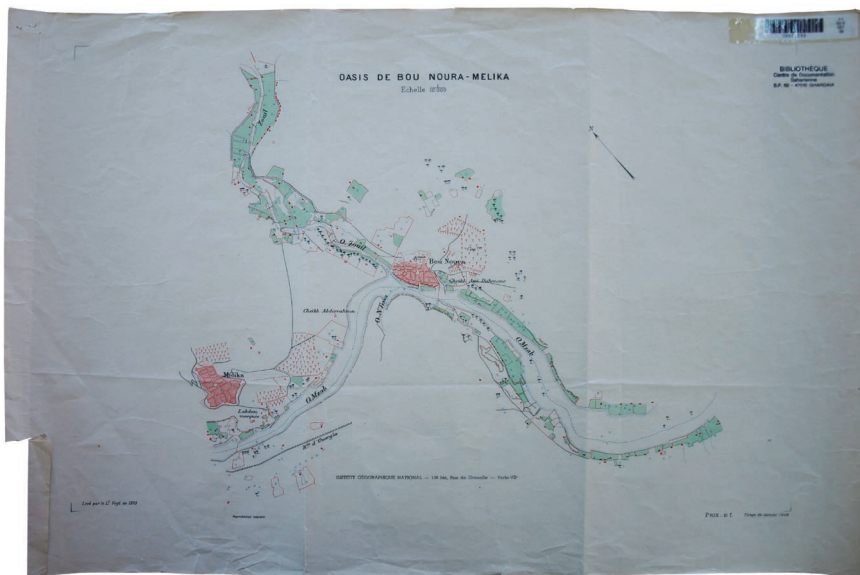
Friday is the greatest day for sightseeing in the M'Zab, when the weekly observance turns the valley into festive mood. Its apotheosis is at dusk, when in a communal enjoyment the population scatter around the eastern gentle ridges of the valley to see the sun setting, just before tracing their way back to the towns when the minarets call for the last prayer of the day. It was a scenery of saturation. The light changing the colour of the rock from pink to orange and the bodies full of dust gently laying on the desert gazing at the vanishing horizon. It was not that different to any cheap version of exotic imaginary. In my eyes, the panorama was as colourised by the sun as by hours of reading Loti, Burton or Flaubert. But what clashed with a clichéd idea was the simple question, 'if this is a desert, what are all these people doing here?' Perhaps here was not the radical exteriority of the Arabian Empty Quarter. It was more the limit where the built environment ceased and the desert took over. However, it was definitely not where the city-in-the-desert ended. The surroundings are fundamental spaces of the pentapole city, almost as key as the built *qsur* [walled settlements proper that configure the five towns of the pentapole]. Each of the poles includes its own palm grove outside the walls. They mainly grow at the shores of the Oued – literally the dry stream-bed. They are not vacant useless spaces. The sandy traces of the former stream is a functional space. In the night it gets empty; however, during the day it is occupied with ephemeral functions – most notably, the main market in Ghardaïa. In the early evening of that Friday, the remaining of the river was being used as pitch for a local game consisting of hitting dried palm leaves with a stone (Fig. 15). Physically, there's a tendency of thinking of the desert as vacant. It is actually rather populated. Metaphorically, the desert is thought of as empty. It is not. The desert is – as I hope the thesis has demonstrated – culturally highly saturated, full of narratives that overlap and are constructed on top of each other.

(following page)
Fig. 15- *River-bed of the Oued, Palm Grove of Ghardaïa.* 2019. Photograph by the author









In the first decade of the 20th century, the French cartographers mapped the palm fields (Fig. 16). Maps in which they could trace agricultural limits and minuscule palm profiles growing in them. But maps in which large expanses were left empty. Beyond the waving limit above ‘Moussa Boukraa’ and to the left of ‘Yahia Forthass’ – as indicated in the map (Fig. 16a) – I saw the twilit *fête champêtre*. Zerzura, Sheba, Ubar...the city-in-the-desert has to necessarily remain unmapped.

[*Road from Ghardaïa to El-Menia (El-Goléa), Sunday,*
17 March, 2019]

As Reyner Banham was pointing, the desert is a space between two points. His desert was between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Making my way from Ghardaïa to El Goléa [contemporary El Menia] was a way of entering the desert, the space between the two points; when the rough surface of the regs – deserts of sand and loose stones – give their way to the ergs – sandy dunes. It was also the place to find camels, as the ones in the oasis are now Fekon, Gevatti, Sanya and other old motorcycle models under extinction in Europe (Fig. 17). Not that they were wild; they were simply relocated to the wilderness, with a once-a-week return for hydration. The road itself is the habitat of the creatures that displace the romantic and exotic life in the oases. These are lorries loaded with clay blocks, dump trucks filled up with debris, and flatbed lorries carrying pipes (Fig. 19). They migrated to the region of the M'Zab with the discovery of gas resources in Hassi R'Mel in the mid-1950s. They are classic – almost cliché – objects in which to observe the relations between the metropolis and its exteriors in terms of colonial past and post-colonial tensions in the present. I was looking for another kind of relationship between the metropolis and its exteriors, so I left them vanishing in the rear-view mirror.

From what I gathered, the donkey is one of the animals that inhabit the desert, camouflaged in the grey *hamada* [rocky plateaux], they just pop up into the retina unexpectedly. You see their shadow as the only element moving as you drive through the barren land. Architecture is the other element that operates like that. At the verges of the few villages that appear en route, concrete structures dissolve the urban into the desert (Fig. 19). I saw them just off Hassi Fehal – which is to say, in the middle of nowhere – when the Trans-Sahara road crosses the last town before the final 150km to reach El Goléa. They were the architecture of the city-in-the-desert, that so

(previous page)

Fig. 16- *Oasis de Ghardaïa*. 1910.

Paris. Institute Géographique

National. From the collection of the Centre Culturel et de Documentation Saharienne, Ghardaïa, Algeria.

Fig. 17- *Oasis de Bou Noura - Melika / Oasis de Beni*

Isguene / Oasis d'El Ateuf. 1910.

Paris. Institute Géographique National. From the collection of the Centre Culturel et de Documentation Saharienne, Ghardaïa, Algeria

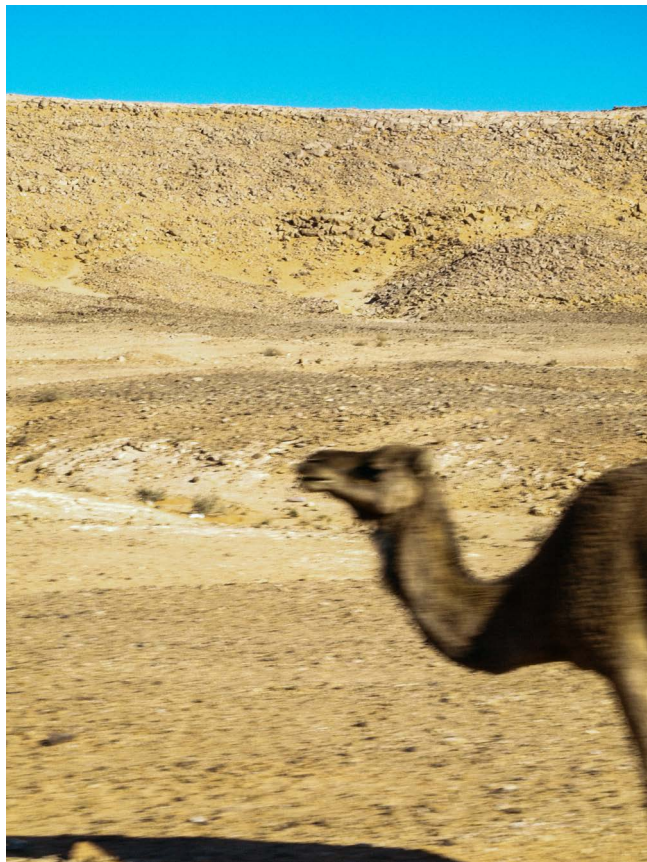
(following page)

Fig. 17- *No title*.

Photographs by the author.

2019







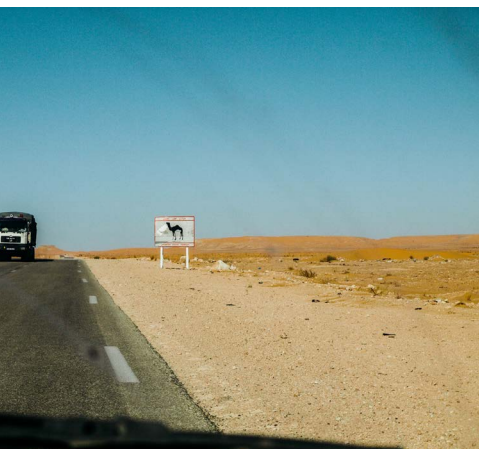




Fig. 19- *Outskirts of Hassi Fehal, Algeria.* Photographs by the author. 2019

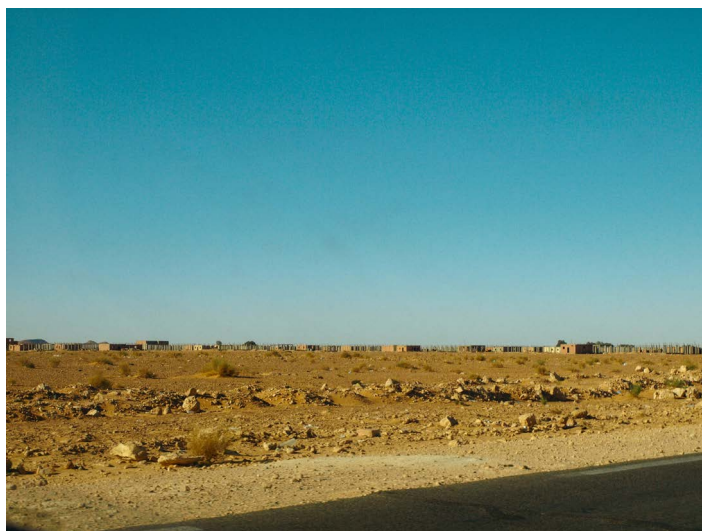
many travellers have seen before me. A place where someone would expect mirages, cutting through the horizon. The final 500 metres or so of the village are crowded with a series of vertical concrete pillars connected horizontally in their foundations. It is true that the dusty windscreen didn't help the focus. But the solidity of the concrete had something of Fata Morgana about it, perhaps not because of their tectonic presence, but rather because they were unformed, half-casted, leaving the rods exposed and expecting the following floor to rise. Their incomplete presence had something of an optical illusion about them; objects that were in a state between ground and figure. As they were that day, not much work was going on, on the site; in fact, by the weathering of the surface, it could have been like that for years now. They were the unfinished product of a development gone bankrupt. Trapped in a condition between ruin and working site. In that state, they appeared as mirror images of the monuments of the M'Zab – cities built around a-thousand years ago from which modern architects went to borrow from their past. But, as opposed to the cities in the oasis, the ones off-the-road were buildings falling into decay before completion. In other words, ruins that were not pointing to the past but to the future. They suggested a different notion of time. One in which you step to not for stocktaking but rather for prophesying.

The road from Ghardaïa to El Golea is full of these two kind of structures. On the one hand the architecture of global technologies – lorries, quarries, and electric towers – ; on the other, the inactive building sites. The latter uses the infrastructure of the former; as the travellers I have looked in the thesis were moving within the infrastructure of colonialism. Yet, as it happened with the travellers, the half-built structures do not fully coincide with the development of global technologies. One is active, the other torpid. They are in the tension between a present that is being built – the actual action taking place in the power stations and quarries – and the latency of the object left in a perpetual state of 'under-construction'. In this perpetual state is where the desert is, I would argue, better observed.

(previous page)
Fig. 18- *No title.*
Photographs
by the author.
2019

(following page)
Fig. 20- *Outskirts of
Hassi Febal, Algeria.*
Photographs
by the author.
2019





[London, Monday, 18 March, 2019]

By the time I came back in London and went through the thesis again, I realised that my journey had never been ‘out-there’ to the empty, solitary, revelatory, primordial other-to-the-metropolis. The desert is not that. The desert is full, saturated with narratives that are constructed one on top of another. The desert is populated with present inhabitants and past diaries of characters that were there. The desert is delusory, blinding in its optical illusions. The desert is high-tech, with the technologies of vision that attempted to capture it. My journey had nothing to do with ‘discovery’, but as Flaubert put it ‘re-discovery’⁸. “The seeds of a thousand notions that one carried within oneself grow and become more definite, like so many refreshed memories.”⁹ If something, I would claim *recovery*. The thesis attempts to unearth the journeys of these minor characters that have been left aside from contemporary historiography. Overall, it attempts to reclaim the mechanism of internalisation as a process through which the modern metropolis is advanced.

My own journey, and the thesis itself as one single journey, move within the logic in which internalisation unfolds. As the trilogy of the Jesuits dealing with Fata Morgana recounts – Athanasius Kircher, the Gruber brothers and Joseph Maria Pernter – the process moves in three steps: description, definition and deciphering. Shocked by the encountering of otherness, initially there’s only – as in Kircher – description. Being this the paradigmatic case of Napoleonic obsessive *Description de l’Egypte*, it is a first manoeuvre that is also found in Maxime du Camp’s photographic rendering, or Flaubert’s Realist diary. Reporting the journey was the first reaction to the allure. The bringing it into a laboratory of the Gruber brothers was a logic consecutive step. A step that moves from description into definition. It is not anymore a generic ‘exterior’, but one that is defined, delimited and circumscribed. A special form of interior that is seen most evidently in the micro-deserts of Ralph Bagnold at Imperial College, but also

in the visionary flights of Le Corbusier in the M'Zab or the edited pictures of Malraux. Finally, Pernter deciphering the phenomenon as distant image in reverse points at how that 'defining' of the exterior is intrinsically related to the interior. It is not a generic exterior to the city, but one that is defined as interior in reverse; for which I chose the phenomenon of the Fata Morgana to illustrate it. A reverse image that, in the form of hybridity can be incorporated back home; as in the Surrealist fetishised Africa, in van Eyck's Otterlo Circles or the shelves of Herman Haan. In my own journey, I also had the triptych, with my photographs – description –, maps – definition – and the thesis itself that operates as a form of decipherment, this time of the desert itself as mechanism of internalisation.

If we look back at the beginning of the Jesuit trilogy, Kircher had his frontispiece (Fig. 1). I find puzzling that he used a Greek myth to illustrate his research on hieroglyphs. It is a transmutation that works simply by putting a pharaonic headdress to the winged beast. But precisely, the North African civilisation was a question of riddles and decipherment. In fact, for Kircher the whole of Egypt was a veritable hieroglyph¹⁰. Leaving the palm trees and monuments at the back, he placed in the foreground the conversation between the two figures. The thesis has something of this. Dealing with these journeys, my question was not in the monuments themselves. Rather, I have tried to trace the relations generated in the journey, understanding the desert where the Oedipal conversation is set, at the outskirts of Thebes, at the verge of the metropolis. It is in this liminal space that the relations are better appreciated. Located there, the reflection was not in the exotic Other, but rather in the mediation between the metropolis and its exteriors. These relations are embedded in the way the travellers were constructing their 'exteriors' in diary entries, drawings, photographs, aerial views and maps. And it is precisely these artefacts the ones that trace their way back to the metropolis. While traditionally these 'objects moving to the metropolis' have been read as acts of direct colonial appropriation – paradigmatically represented

in the figure of the obelisk – I like the fact that Kircher displaced the obelisk to the background. It is another figure that takes its role. While Flaubert’s dictum is still appealing, “Everything in Egypt seems made for architecture”, I like to change the explanation of his remark – “the planes of the fields, the vegetation, the human anatomy, the horizon lines.”¹¹ In Kircher the pyramids, obelisk and exotic palms recess to the rear. It is the sphinx the real figure that emerges from the desert. It is the figure that articulates the limits we have observed in the thesis. It is the sphinx that contains the contemporary questions of *identity* – in its being both male and female, human and animal –, *vision* – it’s a winged-eye and a down-to-earth monster buried in the sand – and *knowledge* – it is the enigmatic propounder of the riddle. Here, as Kircher did, I consciously shift between Egyptian sphinxes – of course, the one in Giza being the most renown, but also the famous avenue of sphinx in Luxor (Thebes) – and the Greek one. It just shows how the sphinx itself was also a movable icon like the obelisk, this one from Thebes (Upper Egypt) to Thebes (Boeotia).

Hybridity – being human and animal – enabled the internalisation. The sphinx is always in-between here and there, one thing and the other. Or, as Homi Bhabha defines the contemporary post- condition, “an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà* – here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth.”¹² The characters whose journeys the thesis traces are Oedipus Africanus. Their fascination was with the possibility of an exterior to the metropolis but in fact their conversations took place at its gates. The artefacts found in the journeys of these characters were apparently immobile, fixed in the ground. But even if not physically – in a material bases – their itineraries as internalised objects in the metropolis can be traced in the very material culture. These internalisations show a subtler form of appropriation than straightforward colonialism. Furthermore, they highlight a history in which the metropolis is not advanced by revolution and exported to the colony; but rather the metropolis expanding by acts of internalisation.



The historical frame I have dealt with (1848-1957) finds always paradigmatic spaces of Modernity in icons like the Crystal Palace, the Eiffel Tower, the grid, the Maison Dom-Ino or the Downtown Athletic Club. Having gone through that period, looking through the modern technologies, I haven't found them. It is rather another figure that continuously popped within the frame. It is the sphinx that was present in Maxime du Camp and Gustave Flaubert's travelogue, sitting on top of Freud's desk, flying in Le Corbusier's *femme à le licorne*, meekly resting in the shelves of Herman Haan, and menacingly guarding the threshold in Kiercher's frontispiece. It is like a MacGuffin in Hitchcock's films or the purloined letter in Edgar Allan Poe's tale, continuously present, giving the clue for decipherment. First it literally emerges from the ground, semi-buried when Du Camp visited it. Then it is photographed, sketched and transmogrified. It gazes the traveller 'with a terrifying stare'¹³ (Flaubert), but quickly is captured in a frame. It lifts up and crashes down into Haan's living-room or next to Freud's couch. It is the figure that from the desert mediates the experience of the traveller, just to make its way into the modern city, capturing the exteriors that were left outside. It is the icon of internalisation. It is the sphinx the figure emerging from the desert as emblem of Modernity.

As opposed to other emblems, first of all, the sphinx is not pure. It is not the primordial Platonic geometries of the pyramid or the obelisk that traditionally have populated the desert. Rather, it is its blended condition that reflect the desert I'm interested in. Not the desert of purity and elementariness, but the impure desert – artificial and natural, north and south, old and new. Second, the sphinx is not diagrammatic icon, its section is not fixed. It continuously needs to be unearthed. The sphinx moves between ground and sky, between burial and birth. It is furthermore a paradigmatic movable device between the desert and the city. Finally, the sphinx is not two-dimensional but volumetric. It is not reproducible if flattened, as it always needs to show its double-face, being here-and-there. While the desert tends to be discussed metaphorically, the sphinx in these characters surprisingly

(facing page)

Fig. 21-

a. Redon, Odilon, *Le sphinx: Mon regard(...)* plate 5 from *To Gustave Flaubert*. 1889. ©Art Institute Chicago

b. Du Camp, Maxime, *Le Sphinx in Egypte, Nubie...* © BnF Gallica.

c-d. Engelman, Edmund. *Sigmund Freud sitting at his desk*. May 1938. From *Sigmund Freud. Vienna IX. Berggasse 19*. 1998. Universe Publishing. Vienna. p.66-67.

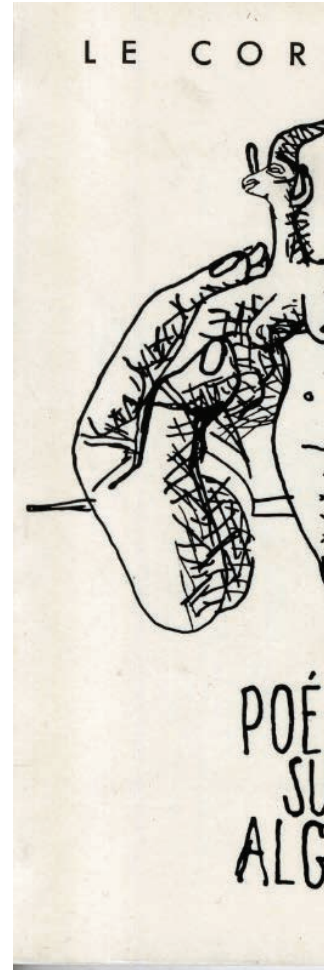
e. Cornelius, Violette. *Herman Haan in his house* in Vollaard, Piet. 1995. p. 39.

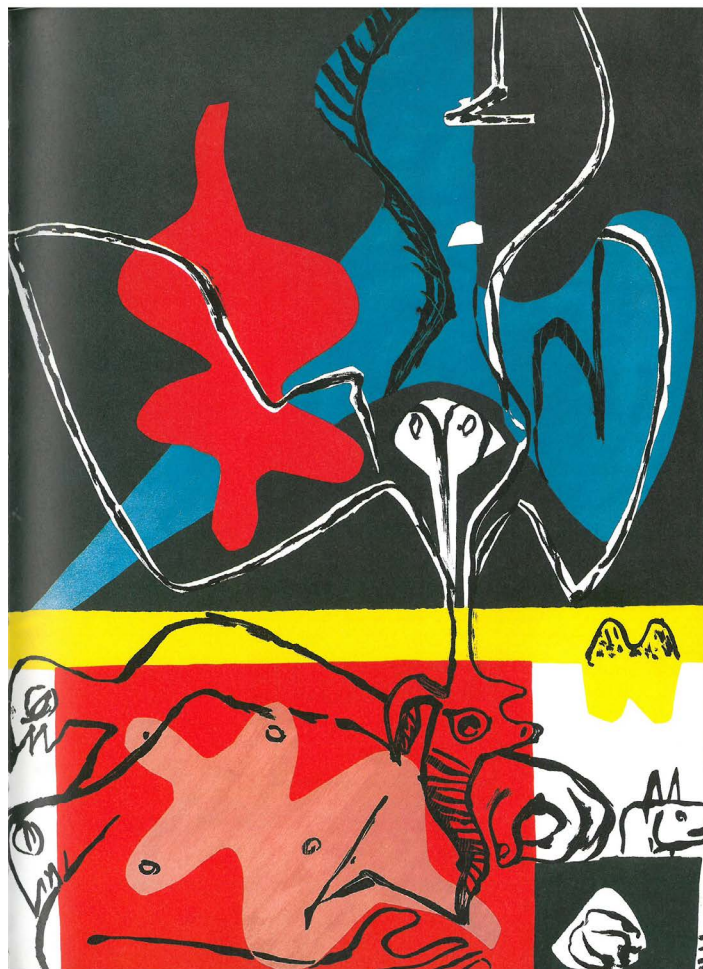
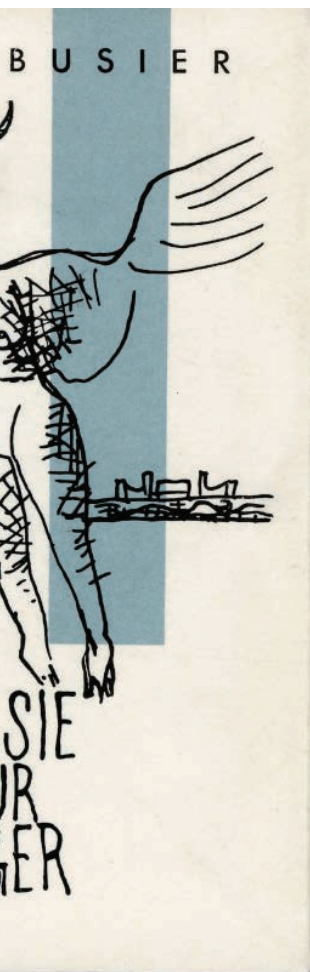
(following page)

Fig. 2

b. Le Corbusier, Cover for *Poésie sur Alger*. 1989, fac-similé of original 1950 edition.

a & c. Le Corbusier, *Le Poème de L'Angle Droit*. 2012. Ostfildern, Germany, Hatje Cantz. pp. 108-109 / 116-117.





moves the metaphoric discourse in a very material form. It is both a metaphor that embodies the notions of the thesis, but also a figure that appears in a very physical way.

Contemporary post-colonial historiography has prioritised the first kind of objects that I found on the desert road – lorries, quarries and power-plants. Active objects that condense relations of power, itineraries of resources in global economies, colonial past and post-colonial present. They are the ways in which the metropolis expands through modernisation. I have opted to look tangentially to Victor Hugo's famous dictum, "we didn't come to Africa to take Africa home with us, but to bring Europe there."¹⁴ In the journeys of the characters in the thesis it was actually all about bringing the exteriors in. It was a way in which the metropolis expanded, by internalising what was originally excluded. In my journey, I found my sphinx. The second kind of objects I came across on the desert road. The objects that this thesis has looked at. They were trapped in an apparent ruinous state. They were mirage-like, outdated monuments and semi-buried remnants. Objects that didn't belong to the metropolis at first glance. However, they were actually latent objects in their 'under-construction' state. They were waiting to be completed; work that consisted in *being projected upon* by the obsessions of the traveller escaping the metropolis. They were solidified dust turned into the gold of El Dorado. They were vanishing points pointing to the future, and not to the past. Nothing about archeology but about futurology. The city-in-the-desert they found in their journeys was not a-city-other-to-the-metropolis but rather a radical condition ahead. A story of the future that the thesis has retrospectively traced. The desert is not an exterior to the history of the metropolis. The desert is a radical ground in which to research paradigms of the metropolis to come.

At the exit threshold of the thesis, the sphinx again poses its riddle. "What is that which has one voice and yet has four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?"¹⁵ A question for which the answer is the end of the Sphinx and the beginning of the

Oedipus' tragedy. An answer that is the cycle of a day, and of birth-growth-and-death. However, the response of my thesis is that "Man"¹⁶ is not enough. His figure has continuously eclipsed the ground. The thesis displaces the figure to the rear, and brings the background to the fore. The answer to the desert is to look at the ground.

Endnotes

1. Flaubert, Gustave. *Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues*. 2002. Paris, Éditions du Boucher. p. 24.
2. cf. *Frontispieces* in Godwin, Joscelyn. *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World. His Life, Work and the Search for Universal Knowledge*. 2015. Inner Traditions International.
3. cf. Genette, Gerard. *Senils*. 2002. Paris, Seuil.
4. cf. O'Brien, Justin. *Nobel Prize-Winner Camus: A Man Committed yet Aloof* in *New York Times*, Dec 8, 1957.
5. Camus, Albert. *Le Minotaure, ou La Halte d'Oran*. The essay dates from 1939, but it was not published until 1946 by the journal *L'Arche* (cf. Spiquel, Agnès. *Camus: amities et question(s) algériennes (1954-1960)* in *The French Review*. 2010. Vol. 83. Issue 6. p. 1195) and for the first time in a book format in 1954 within *L'été*.
6. Camus, Albert. *Minotaur or the Halt at Oran in Summer*. 1995. London, Penguin Books. p. 1.
7. *Ibid.* p. 3.
8. cf. note 14 in Stop 1.
9. Gustave Flaubert as quoted in Steegmuller, Francis. 1972. p.11.
10. cf. Findlen, Paula. 2004. p. 32.
11. cf. Opening quote of "Memphis, Tuesday, 11th Dec 1849, sunset" in Stop 1.
12. Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. 1994. London, Routledge. p.1
13. cf. Opening quote of "Giza, Saturday, 8th Dec 1849, 5am" in Stop 1.
14. Victor Hugo as cited in Elisabeth Fechner, *La Gloire de l'Algérie: Écrivains et photographes de Flaubert à Camus*. 2000. Paris, Calmann Lévy. p. 46.
15. Apollodorus. *Library*, 3. 5. 8. Sir James George Frazer, Ed. Perseus Digital Library.
16. Oedipus' answer to the riddle in *Ibid.*

Bibliography

Prelude. *Genoa, Italy. 1881.*

I. Opening Scene. *Paris. 1848*

Ballerini, J., 2010. *The stillness of Hajj Ishmael: Maxime Du Camp's 1850 photographic encounters.* iUniverse Inc., New York.

Baudelaire, Charles. Trans. William Aggeler, 1954. *The Voyage, I in The Flowers of Evil.* Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild.

Benjamin, W., Jennings, M.W., Eiland, H., Smith, G., 1999. *Walter Benjamin. Vol.2 1927-1934: selected writings.* Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. ; London.

Benjamin, W., Tiedemann, R., 2002. *The arcades project*, 1st Harvard University Press pbk. ed. ed. Harvard University Press, London.

Booth, D.W., 1989. *Some Little-Known Designs by Louis-Pierre Baltard and Jean-Baptiste Rondelet for the Transformation of the Church of the Madeleine into a Temple of Glory.* RACAR: Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review, Études sur l'architecture et son environnement / Studies on Architecture and its Environment 16, 147–154, 251–261.

Brown, F., 2005. *Flaubert in 1848. The Hudson Review* 58, 195–219.

Burke, J., 2006. *The sphinx on the table: Sigmund Freud's art collection and the development of psychoanalysis*, 1st U.S. ed. ed. Walker & Co. : Distributed to the trade by Holtzbrinck Publishers, New York.

Cartledge, P.A., 2009. *Taking Herodotus Personally. The Classical World* 102, 371–382.

Champollion-Figeac, J.-J. (1778-1867) A. du texte, 1833. *L'Obélisque de Louqsor transporté à*

Paris, Notice historique, descriptive et archæologique sur ce monument par M. Champollion-Figeac ; avec la figure de l'obélisque et l'interprétation de ses inscriptions hiéroglyphiques, d'après les dessins et les notes manuscrites de Champollion le jeune.

Christ, Y., Léri, J.-M., 2011. *Paris des utopies.* Chaudun, Paris.

Description de L'Égypte ou Recueil des Observations et des Recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant L'Expédition de l'Armée Française. Publié par les Ordres de sa Majesté l'Empereur Napoléon Le Grand, 1809. . Imprimerie impériale, Paris.

Dobie, M., 2001. *Foreign bodies: gender, language, and culture in French orientalism.* Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif.

Du Camp, M., 1890. *Théophile Gautier.* Hachette, Paris.

Du Camp, M., 1876. *Souvenirs de l'année 1848.* Hachette, Paris.

Du Camp, M., 1855. *Les chants modernes.* M. Lévy frères, Paris.

Durand, J.-N.-L., 2000. *Précis of the lectures on architecture: with, Graphic portion of the lectures on architecture.* Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

Engelman, E., 1999. *Sigmund Freud: Vienna IX. Bergasse 19.* Universe, New York.

Flaubert, G., Baldick, R., 1964. *Sentimental Education. Translated with an introduction by Robert Baldick.* Penguin Books, Harmondsworth.

Flaubert, G., Lévy, M., Suffel, J., 1965. *Lettres Inédites de Gustave Flaubert à son.* Paris.

Flaubert, G., Steegmuller, F., 1972. *Flaubert in Egypt: a sensibility on tour; a narrative drawn from Gustave Flaubert's travel notes & letters, translated from the French and edited by Francis Steegmuller.* Bodley Head, London.

Freud, S., McLintock, D., Haughton, H., 2003. *The uncanny.* Penguin Books, New

York.

Freud, S., Strachey, J., Strachey, A., Freud, A., Tyson, A., Richards, A., 2001. *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, [Repr.]. ed. Vintage, London.

Gautier, Theophile, August 8, 1848. *Du Beau Antique et du Beau Moderne* in *L'Envenement*. Reprinted in Gautier, Theophile, 1883. *Souvenirs de theatre, d'art et de critique*. Paris. Charpentier. pp.197-204.

Histoire véritable de l'obélisque de Luxor, depuis sa naissance jusqu'à ce jour, publiée par un Égyptien..., Almanach Curieux. 1837. Paris, Chassaignon.

Koselleck, R., 2000. *Critique and crisis. Enlightenment and the pathogenesis of modern society*, First MIT Press edition. ed. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

McCauley, Elizabeth A., 1982. *The Photographic Adventure of Maxime Du Camp in Perspectives on Photography* ed. Dave Oliphant and Thomas Zigal. Austin, Texas. The Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin.

Nash, S., 1993. *Home and its dislocations in nineteenth-century France*. State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y.

Poyet, B., 1799. *Projets de places et édifices à ériger pour la gloire et l'utilité de la République*. BnF, Paris.

Said, Edward, 1987. *Orientalism*. London. Penguin Books Ltd.

Solé, R., 2004. *Le Grand Voyage de l'obélisque*. Le Seuil, Paris.

II. **Stop 1.** *The Black Box and the Book of Sekhmet*. Paris. 1848.

Ballerini, J., 2010. *The stillness of Hajj Ishmael : Maxime Du Camp's 1850 photographic encounters*. iUniverse Inc., New York.

Beinlich, H., 2010. *Mit Richard Lepsius auf die Cheops-Pyramide*. Röhl, Dettelbach.

Brown, K., 2014. *Egyptian Voyages: Gustave Flaubert, Maxime Du Camp, and Fouad Elkoury. History of Photography* 38, 161–172.

Denon, V., 1803. *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute-Égypte : pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte. Imprimé sur l'édition originale de Paris, aux frais et pour compte de M. Peltier, par W. Bulmer*, Londres.

Du Camp, M., 1972. *Voyage en Orient (1849-1851) : notes*. Messina : Peloritana.

Du Camp, M., 1882. *Souvenirs littéraires : Maxime Du Camp*. Hachette et cie, Paris.

Du Camp, M., 1860. *Le Nil : Égypte et Nubie, Deuxième édition*. ed. Librairie nouvelle, A. Bourdilliat et cie, éditeurs, Paris.

Du Camp, M., 1852. *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie : dessins photographiques recueillis pendant les années 1849, 1850 et 1851, accompagnés d'un texte explicatif et précédés d'une introduction*. Gide et Baudry, Paris.

The Egyptian Book of the Dead by...with an introduction by Paul Mirecki. 2014. New York, Barnes & Noble.

Flaubert, G., 1913. *Le dictionnaire des idées reçues : texte établi d'après le manuscrit original et publié avec une introduction et un commentaire* [par E. L. Ferrère]. L. Conard, Paris.

Flaubert, G., Biasi, P.-M. de, 1991. *Voyage en Egypte*. B. Grasset, Paris.

Flaubert, G., Naaman, A., 1965. *Les Lettres d'Égypte de Gustave Flaubert : d'après les manuscrits autographes par Antoine Youssef Naaman*, Ed. critique. ed. Nizet, Paris.

Flaubert, G., Steegmuller, F., 1972. *Flaubert in Egypt: a sensibility on tour; a narrative drawn from Gustave Flaubert's travel notes & letters, translated from the French and edited by Francis Steegmuller*. Bodley Head, London.

Gautier, T., Cottin, M., 1973. *Voyage*

pittoresque en Algérie (1845). Droz, Genève.

Hays, K.M., 1998. *Oppositions reader: selected readings from a journal for ideas and criticism in architecture, 1973-1984*. Princeton Architectural Press, New York.

McCauley, Elizabeth A., 1982. *The Photographic Adventure of Maxime Du Camp in Perspectives on Photography* ed. Dave Oliphant and Thomas Zigal. Austin, Texas. The Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin.

Mortier, R., 1974. *La poétique des ruines en France : ses origines, ses variations, de la Renaissance à Victor Hugo*. Droz, Genève.

Peck, William H. 2001. *Lepsius, Karl Richard* in Redford, Donald B. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, Volume 2*. Oxford University Press. pp. 289–290.

Rykwert, J., 1972. *On Adam's house in Paradise: the idea of the primitive hut in architectural history*. Museum of Modern Art, in association with The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago, New York.

Said, E.W., 1987. *Orientalism*. London. Penguin Books Ltd.

Sánchez Cardona, Ana Paula. 2010. *Materialización de la memoria. Escritura y fotografía como representación de la experiencia del viaje en el siglo XIX*. PhD, Barcelona. Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Semper, G., Mallgrave, H.F., 2010. *The four elements of architecture and other writings*, First paperback edition. ed, RES monographs in anthropology and aesthetics. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge New York New Rochelle, Melbourne Sydney.

Skilton, David. 2017. *Tourist at the Ruins of London. The Metropolis and the Struggle for Empire in Cercles* vol. 17. pp. 93-119.

Vidler, A., 1987. *The writing of the walls :*

architectural theory in the late enlightenment. Princeton Architectural Press, Princeton, N.J.

Volney, Constantin François, 2000. *The Ruins: or A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires*. (re-print of 1811 ed.) Woodstock Books. Washington D.C.

Volney, Constantin François, 1959. *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie*. Mouton, Paris.

Volney, Constantin François, 1787. *Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785*. for G.G.J. and J. Robinson, London.

III. **Excursus Arabia Deserta** 1. *Khenti-Amentiu [Foremost of the Westerners]. Arabian Knights in Disguise*. Mecca. 1888.

Assad, T.J., 1964. *Three Victorian travellers: Burton, Blunt, Doughty, by Thomas J. Assad*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

Ballerini, J., 2010. *The stillness of Hajj Ismael : Maxime Du Camp's 1850 photographic encounters*. iUniverse Inc., New York.

Banham, R., 1989. *Scenes in America deserta*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. ; London.

Barthes, R., 2000. *Camera lucida : reflections on photography*, 1st American ed. ed. Vintage, London.

Barthes, R., 1972. *Le degré zéro de l'écriture, suivi de Nouveaux essais critiques*. Points Seuil, Paris.

Barthes, Roland. 1972. *Préface à Aziyadé in Critique*, February.

Bhabha, H.K., 2004. *The location of culture*, 2nd ed. ed. Routledge, London ; New York.

Boisdeffre, P. de, Maumon, M., Sforza, A., Martin, J.-J., 1996. *Pierre Loti : ses maisons*. C. Pirot éditeur, St.-Cyr-sur-Loire.

Burton, R.F., 1857. *Personal narrative of a pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah*, 2d ed. Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and

Roberts, London.

Doughty, C.M., 1964. *Travels in Arabia Deserta*. London.

Flaubert, G., Steegmuller, F., 1972. *Flaubert in Egypt: a sensibility on tour; a narrative drawn from Gustave Flaubert's travel notes & letters, translated from the French and edited by Francis Steegmuller*. Bodley Head, London.

Howe, Kathleen S, 1996. *Egypt Recovered: The Photographic Surveys of Maxime Du Camp, Félix Teynard, and John Beasley Greene, and the Development of Egyptology*. (PhD dissertation). Albuquerque, New Mexico, University of New Mexico.

Liot, T., 1999. *La maison de Pierre Loti à Rochefort, 1850-1923 : texte et photographies*. Editions Patrimoines médias, [Chauray].

Loti, P., 1898. *Figures et choses qui passaient*. Calmann Lévy, Paris, Nelson.

Loti, P., 1895. *Le désert*, 2e éd. Calmann Levy, Paris.

Loti, P., Dugas, G., Quella-Villéger, A., 2000. *Nouvelles et récits*. Omnibus, Paris.

Loti, P., Quella-Villéger, A., Vercier, B., 2012. *Pierre Loti, photographe*. Bleu autour, Saint-Pour-cain-sur-Sioule.

McLynn, F., 1990. *Burton : snow upon the desert*. John Murray, London.

Palgrave, W.G., 1873. *Personal narrative of a year's journey through Central and Eastern Arabia (1862-63)*. Macmillan, London.

Quella-Villéger, A., 1998. *Pierre Loti : le pèlerin de la planète*. Auberon, Bordeaux.

Said, E.W., 1995. *Orientalism*, Repr. with a new afterword. ed. Penguin, London.

Turberfield, P.J., 2008. *Pierre Loti and the theatricality of desire*. Rodopi, Amsterdam.

Vercier, B., Loti, P., 2002. *Pierre Loti portraits : les fantaisies changeantes*. Flammarion, Paris.

Wilkinson, R.H., 2017. *Complete gods &*

goddesses of ancient Egypt, 1st ed. Thames & Hudson, New York, NY.

IV. **Stop 2.** *The Rise of Phaethon*. Border Egypt-Libya, 1932

Bagnold, R.A., 1990. *Sand, wind, and war : memoirs of a desert explorer*. Tucson, University of Arizona Press.

Bagnold, R.A., 1987. *Libyan sands : travels in a dead world*, New ed. M. Haag, London.

Bagnold, R.A., 1954. *The physics of blown sand and desert dunes*, [Reprint with new preface]. ed. Methuen & co., Ltd., London.

Bagnold, R.A., 1935. *Libyan sands : travel in a dead world*. Hodder and Stoughton, London.

Bagnold, R.A. & Harding King, W. J., 1931. *Journeys in the Libyan Desert 1929 and 1930 in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 78, No. 6 (Dec., 1931)

Barthes, R., 2000. *Camera lucida : reflections on photography*, 1st American ed. ed. Vintage, London.

Barthes, R., Howard, R., 2009. *New critical essays*. ed. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill.

Beadnell, H. J. L., 1934. *Libyan Desert Dunes in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 84, No. 4 (Oct., 1934)

Bermann, Richard A., 1934. *Historic Problems of the Libyan Desert in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934)

Clayton, P., 1998. *Desert explorer : a biography of Colonel P.A. Clayton DSO, MBE, FRGS, FRCS, FGS, 1896 to 1962*. Zorzura Press, Cargreen, Cornwall.

Cosgrove, D., 1994. *Contested Global Visions: One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs. Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84, 270–294.

Cox, Percy, H. E., Myres, J. L., Miss Caton-

Thompson, Griffith, F. L., Wingate, Orde and Bermann, Richard A., 1934. *Historic Problems of the Libyan Desert: Discussion in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934).

Diederichsen, D., 2013. *The whole earth : California and the disappearance of the outside*. Sternberg Press, Berlin.

Euripides, Collard, C. (Christopher), Cropp, M., 2008. *Euripides. [Vol. 8] Fragments : Oedipus-Chrysippus. Other fragments*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. ; London.

F. J. R. R., 1933. *A Reconnaissance of the Gilf Kebir by the Late Sir Robert Clayton East Clayton in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (Mar., 1933)

Gross, Kuno, 2011. *The Bagnold Sun-Compass: Long Range Desert Group*. Norderstedt, Books on Demand GmbH.

Kádár, Ladislav, 1934. *A Study of the Sand Sea in the Libyan Desert in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934)

Nietzsche, F.W., Hollingdale, R.J., 1969. *Thus spoke Zarathustra : a book for everyone and no one*, Repr. with new introd. ed. Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Penderel, H. W. G. J., 1934. *The Gilf Kebir in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934)

Poidebard, A. (Antoine), Denise, F., Nordiguian, L., 2004. *Une aventure archéologique : Antoine Poidebard, photographe et aviateur*. Parenthèses, Marseille.

Saint-Exupéry, A. de, 1939. *Wind, sand and stars*. Reynal & Hitchcock ..., [New York].

Török, Zsolt G. 2012. *From Expedition Cartography to Topographic Mapping: Italian Military Maps of the Southern Libyan Desert from the 1930s in Beineke, Dieter/Heunecke, Otto, Horst, Thomas & Kleim, Uwe G.F.*

Festschrift für Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. 2012. Kurt Brunner anlässlich des Ausscheidens aus dem aktiven Dienst. Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Geodäsie der Universität der Bundeswehr München, Heft 87.

Völter, H., Beyer, M., 2011. *Wolkenstudien = Cloud studies = Études des nuages*, 1. Aufl. ed. Spector Books, Leipzig.

Wolfflin, H., 1964. *Renaissance and Baroque : Heinrich Wolfflin*. Translated by Kathrin Simon; with an introduction by Peter Murray. Collins, [London].

V. **Stop 3.** *The Algerian Sphinx. or 2°20'14.03" East*. Ghardaïa, 1933

Abdelhamid, R., Cataldi, G., Selva, F., 1994. *THE TOWN OF GHARDAIA IN M'ZAB: BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN ALGERIA. Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 6, 78–78.

Banham, Reyner, 1968. *Memories of a persistent air-traveller in Interior Design*. Feb. 1968.

Boyer, M.C., 2003. *Aviation and the Aerial View: Le Corbusier's Spatial Transformations in the 1930s and 1940s. Diacritics* 33, 93–116.

Buckley, C., Rhee, P., 2011. *Architects' journeys : building, traveling, thinking*, 1st ed. ed. GSAPP Books, New York.

Camus, A., 1947. *La peste*. Gallimard, Paris.

Çelik, Z., 1997. *Urban forms and colonial confrontations : Algiers under French rule*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Çelik, Z., 1992. *Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism. Assemblage* 59–77.

Cohen, J.-L., 2006. *Architectural History and the Colonial Question: Casablanca, Algiers and Beyond. Architectural History* 49, 349–372.

Corbusier, L., 1925. *Vers une architecture*, new ed. Cres, Paris.

Fondation Le Corbusier. Rencontres (16th : 2010 : Marseille)creator, Bonillo, J.L., 2012. *Le Corbusier, visions d'Alger*, 1re éd. ed. Éditions de la Villette : Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

Gerber, Alex. 1994. *Le Corbusier et le mirage de l'Orient. L'influence supposée de l'Algérie sur son œuvre architecturale* in *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée, Figures de l'orientalisme en architecture*, n°73-74.

Gerber, Alex. 1993. *L'Algérie de Le Corbusier. Les Voyages de 1931*. These n° 1077 (1992). Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne.

Houard, Georges, 1932. *Les Ailes : journal hebdomadaire de la locomotion aérienne*. 20 Nov. 1932.

Jardot, M., 1960. *Le Corbusier: my work*. Architectural Press, London.

Le Corbusier, 2012. *Le poeme de l'angle droit*. Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern.

Le Corbusier, 1977. *Manière de penser l'urbanisme*. Gonthier.

Le Corbusier, 1967. *The radiant city : elements of a doctrine or urbanism to be used as the basis of our machine-age civilization*. Faber & Faber, London.

Le Corbusier, 1950. *Poésie sur Alger*. Falaize, Paris.

Le Corbusier, 1946. *Manière de penser l'urbanisme*, Collection Ascoral. Éditions de l'architecture d'aujourd'hui, Boulogne-sur-Seine.

Le Corbusier, 1941. *Sur les 4 routes*, 4e éd. ed. Libr. Gallimard, Paris.

Le Corbusier, 1935. *Aircraft*. The Studio Publications Inc., London.

Le Corbusier, 1931. 'Coupe en Travers. Retours...ou L'Enseignement du Voyage' in *Plans*. Oct. 1931. Paris.

Le Corbusier, Baudouï, R., Dercelles, A., 2013. *Le Corbusier correspondance : tome*

II : Lettres à la famille, 1926-1946. Infolio, Gollion.

Le Corbusier, Cantone, C., 2016. *Poem on Algiers* =: *Die Poesie Algiers*. Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern.

McEwen, I.K., 1993. *Socrates' ancestor : an essay on architectural beginnings*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Mercier, M., 1922. *La civilisation urbaine au Mzab : étude de sociologie africaine*. Pfister, Alger.

Monteys Roig, Xavier & Fuertes Perez, Pere, 2016. *Le Corbusier. Streets, Promenades, Scenes and Artefacts* in *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*. Vol. 40, no.2.

Morshed, A., 2002. *The Cultural Politics of Aerial Vision: Le Corbusier in Brazil (1929)*. *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 55, 201-210.

Naphegyi, G., 1871. *Ghardaia, or, Ninety days among the B'ni Mozab : adventures in the oasis of the desert of Sahara*. G. P. Putnam., New York.

VI. **Excursus 2** *Eyes that do not see – Desert*. Sheba, 1934

Arnaud, Joseph, 1845. *Pièces relatives aux inscriptions himyrites découvertes à San'â, à Khariba, à Mareb, etc.* in *Journal Asiatique*. Sept-Oct 1845. pp. 169- 237

Arnaud, Joseph, 1845. *Relation d'un voyage à Mareb (Saba) entrepris en 1843* in *Journal Asiatique*, 1845, Tome V, pp. 208-25 & 309-345; 1845, Tome VI, pp.169-237.

Arnaud, T.-J., Vayssière, A., Schopp, C., 2011. *Voyage au pays de la reine de Saba : suivi de, En Egypte*. Pygmalion, Paris.

Corniglion-Molinier, Édouard, 1934. *La Naissance d'un raid* in *L'Intransigeant*. May 5th, 1934.

Derrida, J., Brault, P.-A., Naas, M., 1993.

Memoirs of the blind: the self-portrait and other ruins. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Foucault, Michel, 1966. *Les Mots et les choses.* Éditions Gallimard, Paris.

Glaser, E., Müller, D.H., Rhodokanakis, N., 1913. *Eduard Glasers Reise nach Márib.* Hölder, Wien.

Malraux, André, 2011. *La Reina de Saba. Una aventura geográfica.* Barcelona, Ediciones Peninsula.

Malraux, A., 1968. *Antimemoirs.* H. Hamilton, London.

Malraux, André, 1934 (1). *A la découverte de la capitale mystérieuse de la reine de Saba. II. – Fantômes de sable* in *L'Intransigeant*. May 4th, 1934.

Malraux, André, 1934 (2) *A la découverte de la capitale mystérieuse de la reine de Saba. I. – Porte de l'Inconnu* in *L'Intransigeant*. May 3th, 1934.

Marinetti, F.T., 1912. *Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista.* Direzione del movimento futurista, Milano.

Mohl, Jules, 1874. *Plan de la Digue et de la Ville de Mareb, par M. Tb. Jos. Arnaud, Note Préliminaire* in *Journal Asiatique*. 1874, Vol. 1. p. 1-3

Nietzsche, F.W., Hollingdale, R.J., 2003. *Thus spoke Zarathustra: a book for everyone and no one.* Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Nietzsche, F.W., Hollingdale, R.J., Breazeale, D., 1997. *Untimely meditations.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Plato, Fowler, H.N., 1982. *Plato: in twelve volumes. 1 Euthyphro apology crito Phaedo Phaedrus.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Plato. *The Republic.* 1955. Penguin Books, London.

Rykwert, J., 1976. *The idea of a town: the anthropology of urban form in Rome, Italy and the ancient world.* Princeton University Press,

Princeton, [N.J.].

VII. **Stop 4** *Le Domain de l'Afrique.* Libyan desert somewhere between Benghazi and Cairo, at about 2.45am, December, 30th 1935.

Baudrillard, J., 1986. *Amérique.* B. Grasset, Paris.

Breton, A.R., 1972. *Manifestes du surréalisme.* Édition complète. Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris.

Brient, P., 2013. *L'invention de Roussel. La clinique lacanienne* n° 24, 149–167.

Bunkse, E.V., 1990. *Saint-Exupéry's Geography Lesson: Art and Science in the Creation and Cultivation of Landscape Values.* *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80, 96–108.

Cadadec, François, 2001. *Raymond Roussel; the biography by François Caradec, trans. by Ian Monk.* Atlas Press, London.

Company, D., 2015. *A handful of dust: from the cosmic to the domestic,* First edition published by Mack. ed. Mack; Le Bal, London, Paris.

Cherniack-Tzurriel, A., 1976. *Theatre of the Mechanized Grotesque. Roussel's "Impressions of Africa."* *The Drama Review: TDR* 20.

Clifford, J., 1981. *On Ethnographic Surrealism.* *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, 539–564.

Dalí, S., Ades, D., 2000. *Dalí's optical illusions.* Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn.

Dalí, S., 1993. *The secret life of Salvador Dalí,* 5th ed. ed. Alkin Books, Porchester.

Dalí, Salvador. 1933. *Interprétation Paranoïaque-critique de l'Image obsédante "L'Angélus" de Millet* in *Minotaure. Vol.1.*

Duboy, Philippe, 1988. *The Traveller and his Shadow Raymond Roussel's 'Maison Roulant'.*

Daidalos. 15 June. Vol. 28.

Ferry, J., 1953. *Une étude sur Raymond Roussel*. Arcanes, Paris.

Foucault, M., 1989. *The order of things : an archaeology of human sciences*. Routledge, London.

Foucault, M., Ruas, C., 1987. *Death and the labyrinth : the world of Raymond Roussel*, 1st ed. ed. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Foucault, Michel, 1962. *Speaking and Seeing in Raymond Roussel* (variant of first chapter of *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, which was first published in *Lettre Ouverte* 4. Summer 1962. pp. 38-51

Griale, Marcel, 1932. *Mission Dakar-Djibouti, (loi du 31 mars 1931) : Rapport général (mai 1931-mai 1932)*. Protat frères, Macon.

Gombrich, E.H. (Ernst H.), 1989. *Art and illusion : a study in the psychology of pictorial representation*, 2d ed., 1989 printing. ed. published for Bollingen Foundation by Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.

Hollier, D., 2005. *Notes (On the Index Card)*. *October* 112, 35–44.

Holmes, M., 2013. *A Garden of Earthly Delights. AA Files* 37–41.

Jové, J., 2005. *Monográfico Salvador Dalí*. Universitat de Lleida, Spain.

Leiris, Michel, 1951. *L' Afrique fantôme : (de Dakar à Djibouti, 1931-1933)*, 10. éd. ed. Gallimard, [Paris].

Leiris, Michel, 1939. *Autour des 'Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique'*. *Cahiers G.L.M.*, March. Vol. IX.

Leiris, Michel, 1936. *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres in Nouvelle Revue Française*. Jan. Vol. 268.

Leiris, Michel, 1935 (1). *L'Abyssinie intime in Mer et outre-mer*. June. Vol 1.

Leiris, Michel, 1935 (2). *Raymond Roussel. La Nouvelle Revue Française*. April. pp. 575-582

Leiris, Michel, 1935 (3). *Le Voyageur et son Ombre. La Bête Noire*, April 1st.

Leiris, Michel, 1933 (1). *Danses Funéraires Dogon in Minotaure*. Vol. 1. pp. 73-76.

Leiris, Michel, 1933 (2). *Masques Dogon in Minotaure*. Vol. 2. pp. 45-51

Leiris, Michel, 1930. *L'oeil de l'Ethnographe. Documents*. No. 7.

Leiris, M., Edwards, B.H., 2017. *Phantom Africa*, The Africa list. Seagull Books, Calcutta, India.

Letcher, P., 2003. *Eccentric France : the Bradt guide to the frolics and frivolity of the French*. Bradt, Chalfont St. Peter.

Maddox, C., Dalí, S., 1979. *Dalí*. Hamlyn, London ; New York.

La Maison Roulante de M. Roussel. 1926. *La Revue du Touring Club de France*. August. pp. X-XI.

Malraux, A., 1968. *Antimemoirs*. H. Hamilton, London.

Malraux, A., 1956. *Lawrence and the Demon of the Absolute. The Hudson Review* 8, 519–532.

Malraux, A., Autrand, M., Guyard, M.-F., 1996. *Oeuvres complètes*. Gallimard, Paris.

Marcel Duchamp, 1977. *Série des catalogues du Musée national d'art moderne-Centre Georges Pompidou*. Musée national d'art moderne, Paris.

Marmande, F., Rischin, A.S., 1992. *Michel Leiris: The Letter to Louise. Yale French Studies* 28–34.

Mbembe, A., 2015. *On the postcolony*. Wits University Press, Johannesburg.

Mémoires de la société des ingénieurs civils. 1879. Vol. 32. p. 726-728.

Pliny, Bostock, J., Riley, H.T., 1855. *The Natural History of Pliny*. Bohn, [S.I.].

Richardson, Michael, 1993. *An Encounter of Wise Men and Cyclops Women. Consideration of debates on surrealism and anthropology in Critique*

and *Anthropology*. Vol. 13(1). pp. 57-75.

Raillard, Georges. 1977. *Roussel, les fils de la Vierge*, in the catalogue *L'Oeuvre de Marcel Duchamp* (vol. III). Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

Roussel, Raymond, 2015. *Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique: orné de cinquante-neuf dessins de H.-A. Zo*. Paris, Éditions Ombres.

Roussel, R., Winkfield, T., 1995. *How I wrote certain of my books and other writings*. Exact Change, Boston, Mass.

Roussel, Raymond, 1935. *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres*. *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. April. pp. 583-615

Roussel, Raymond, 1906. *Carnet de notes prises durant un voyage en Egypte, 22 novembre – 21 decembre*. Ref. NAF 26394 cote LXV. Archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Rumbold, R., 1954. *The winged life : a portrait of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, poet and airman*. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London.

Said, E.W., 1995. *Orientalism*, Repr. with a new afterword. ed. Penguin, London.

Saint-Exupéry, A. de, 1966. *Vuelo Nocturno*. Ediciones G P, Barcelona.

Saint-Exupéry, A. de, 1939. *Wind, sand and stars*. Reynal & Hitchcock ..., New York.

Saint-Exupéry, A. de, Gilbert, S., 1952. *The wisdom of the sands*. Hollis & Carter, London.

Sánchez Vidal, A., 1988. *Buñuel, Lorca, Dali: el enigma sin fin*, 1a ed. ed. Planeta, Barcelona.

Seigel, Carol(ed.) 2018. *Freud, Dali & the Metamorphosis of Narcissus*. Freud Museum London, London.

Walker, I., 1997. *Phantom Africa: Photography between Surrealism and Ethnography* (*L'Afrique fantôme. La photographie entre surréalisme et ethnographie*). *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 37, 635–655.

Whitfield, S., 2000. *Dali's Optical Illusions*. Hartford, Washington, and Edinburgh. *The Burlington Magazine* 142, 518–519.

VIII. **Stop 5** *Ex Africa Aliquid Novum*. Algerian Sahara, 1951.

Baird, George, 2006. *The Publication of Meaning in Architecture in TEAM 10: Keeping the Language of Modern Architecture Alive*. Conference organised by the Faculty of Architecture. Delft University of Technology. January 5th-6th, 2006. TU Delft. p. 73-86.

Bakema, Jaap, 1959. *'Death of CLAM' as Staged by Team 10*. Archives of Jaap Bakema at the Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Banham, R., 1989. *Scenes in America deserta*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. ; London.

Bedaux, R.M.A., 1982. *Rediscovering the Tellem of Mali*. *Archaeology* 35, 28–34.

Beek, W.E.A. van, Bedaux, R.M.A., Blier, S.P., Bouju, J., Crawford, P.I., Douglas, M., Lane, P., Meillassoux, C., 1991. *Dogon Restudied: A Field Evaluation of the Work of Marcel Griaule [and Comments and Replies]*. *Current Anthropology* 32, 139–167.

Bletter, R., 1971. *Review of Meaning in Architecture*. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 30, 178–180.

Blom, H., 2010. *Dogon: images & traditions*. B. Dulon, Paris.

Buckley, C., Rhee, P., 2011. *Architects' journeys : building, traveling, thinking*, 1st ed. ed. GSAPP Books, New York.

Campbell, M., 2013. *Blood Simple. AA Files* 153–155.

Colomina, B., Smithson, P., 2000. *Friends of the Future: A Conversation with Peter Smithson*. October 94, 3–30.

Dainese, E., 2013. *Le Corbusier, Marcel*

Griaule, and the Modern Movement: exploring the habitat from the airplane.

Eugenio Morello, Barbara E.A. Piga, EAEA11 2013. Envisioning Architecture: Design, Evaluation, Communication, pp. 413-418.

Eyck, A. van, n.d. *Niet om het even: wel evenwaardig: van en over Aldo van Eyck*.

Eyck, A. van, Ligtelijn, V., Strauven, F., 2008 (1). *The child, the city and the artist : an essay on architecture : the in-between realm*. SUN, Amsterdam.

Eyck, A. van, Ligtelijn, V., Strauven, F., 2008 (2). *Writings*. SUN, Amsterdam.

Eyck, A. van, 1967. *A Miracle of Moderation*. *Forum*, July, p. 35; English version in *Via*, no.1, p.15.

Eyck, A. van, 1961. *Architecture of the Dogon in Architectural Forum*. Sept. Vol. 115. No. 5. p. 186

Eyck, A. van, 1953. *Bouwen in de Zuidelijke Oasen [Building in the Southern Oases]*. *Forum*. No. 1.

Godlewski, J., 2010. *Alien and Distant: Rem Koolhaas on Film in Lagos, Nigeria*. *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 21, 7–19.

Grasskamp, W., Elliott, F., 2016. *The book on the floor: André Malraux and the imaginary museum*. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

Griaule, Marcel, 1933. *Introduction Méthodologique*. *Minotaure* Vol. 2. pp. 6-12.

Griaule, Marcel, 1932. *Mission Dakar-Djibouti, (loi du 31 mars 1931) : Rapport général (mai 1931-mai 1932)*. Protat frères, Macon.

Griaule, Marcel, 1931. *Instructions Sommaires pour les Collecteurs d'Objets Ethnographiques*. May. Musée d'Ethnographie et Mission Scientifique Dakar-Djibouti. Paris, Palais du Trocadéro.

Haan, H.P.C., 1965. *Dogon*. *Byggekunst*. No

2. pp. 29-43

Haan, H.P.C., 1965. *The House is the Belly of the Mother*. *Architects' Year Book*. London. Elek Books.

Haan, H.P.C., 1964. *Verkenning van een oude Afrikaanse cultuur. (Tellem.)* [With illustrations.]. Museum voor Land- en Volkenunde: Rotterdam; Antropo-biologisch Instituut der Rijksuniversiteit: Utrecht.

Heuvel, Dirk Van den(ed.) et al. 2018. *Jaap Bakema and the Open Society*. Archis Publishers, Amsterdam.

Jaschke, K., 2012. *Mythical Journeys: Ethnography, Archaeology, and the Attraction of Tribal Cultures in the Work of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan*. PhD thesis. Princeton University, Princeton.

Jaschke, K., 2006. *Mythopoesis of Place and Culture: Aldo van Eyck, Herman Haan, and the Dogon in TEAM 10: Keeping the Language of Modern Architecture Alive*. Conference organised by the Faculty of Architecture. Delft University of Technology. January 5th-6th, 2006. TU Delft.

Jaschke, K., 2003. *Architects in the Field: the African Journeys of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Haan*. *Thesis*, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar* 49, 20–27.

Kahn, Louis, 1971. "Aldo van Eyck..." in 1971 interview. *What Will Be Has Always Been: The Words of Louis I. Kahn*, Richard Saul Wurman, ed. 1986. New York, Rizzoli

Kohn, E., 2012. *The Ethnographic Magician: Jean Rouch's African Films*. *Cinéaste* 38, 24–27.

Koolhaas, R., 1978. *Delirious New York*. Thames and Hudson.

Koolhaas, R., Koolhaas, R., Boeri, S., Kwinter, S., Tazi, N., Obrist, H.-U., 2001. *Mutations*. Arc en rêve centre d'architecture, Bordeaux.

Lootsma, Bart, 2007. *Koolhaas*,

Constant and Dutch Culture in the 1960's in architecturaltheory.eu. September 4.

McCarter, R., Hertzberger, H., 2015. *Aldo van Eyck*. Yale University Press, New Haven ; London.

Mumford, Eric Paul, 2000. *The CLAM discourse on urbanism, 1928-1960*, 1st MIT Press pbk. ed. ed. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

[n.a.], 1960. *Resurrection Move Fails at Otterlo*. *Architectural Review*. Feb. Vol. 127. No. 756. p. 78-79.

Newman, O., 1961. *CLAM '59 in Otterlo*. A. Tiranti, London.

Pedret, A., 2013. *Team 10 : an archival history*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London ; New York.

Risselada, M., Heuvel, D. van den, 2005. *Team 10 : 1953-81, in search of a utopia of the present*. NAI Publishers, Rotterdam.

Rogers, Ernesto N, 1959. *The CLAM at the museum in Casabella*. Vol. 232. p. 2-3.

Rudofsky, B., 1964. *Architecture without architects : a short introduction to non-pedigreed architecture*. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Smithson, A., 1991. *Team 10 meetings : 1953-1984*. Publikatieburo Bouwkunde, Delft, The Netherlands.

Smithson, A.M., 1982. *The emergence of Team 10 out of C.I.A.M*. Architectural Association, London.

Somol, R., 1997. *Autonomy and ideology : positioning an avant-garde in America*. The Monacelli Press, New York.

Strauven, F., 1998. *Aldo van Eyck: the shape of relativity*. Architectura & Natura, Amsterdam.

TEAM 10: Keeping the Language of Modern Architecture Alive. 2006. Conference organised by the Faculty of Architecture.

Delft University of Technology. January 5th-6th. TU Delft.

Teyssot, G., 2013. *A Topology of Everyday Constellations*. MIT Press.

Teyssot, G., 2008. *Aldo van Eyck's Threshold: The Story of an Idea*. Log 33–48.

IX. **Excursus 3** *Fata Morgana*. Empty Quarter, 1950

Kircher, Athanasius, 1671. *Ars magna Lucis et Umbrae in decem libros digesta, etc.*, Editio altera, priori multo auctior. ed. Amstelodami.

Baudrillard, J., Turner, C., 2000. *America*, 11th impression. ed. Verso, London.

Breton, A., Mills, C., 1969. *Fata Morgana*. Black Swan Press, Chicago.

Cronin, P., Herzog, W., 2014. *Werner Herzog : a guide for the perplexed*. Faber & Faber, London.

Edwards, B.H., 1998. *The Ethnics of Surrealism*. *Transition* 84–135.

Eyck, A. van, Ligtelijn, V., Strauven, F., 2008. *Writings*. SUN, Amsterdam.

Findlen, P. (Ed.), 2004. *Athanasius Kircher: the last man who knew everything*. Routledge, New York.

Freud, S., McLintock, D., Haughton, H., 2003. *The uncanny*. Penguin Books, New York.

Gruber, Tobias, 1791. "Bemerkungen über H. Erasmus Darwins Folgerungen aus Versuchen auf die Erzeugung der Kälte durch die mechanische Ausdehnung der Luft u.s.w. *Journal der Physik*. vol. 1, 73. and in *Gren's Journal der Physik*, vol. 3, 188-196.

Hartwig, G., 1874. *The Aerial World: a popular account of the phenomena and life of the atmosphere, etc*. London.

Južnič, Stanislav, 2008. *Euler and the Jesuits in Russia. Quaderns d'Història de l'Enginyeria*.

Volume IX. pp. 219-247.

Koolhaas, Tomas, 2016. REM(documentary).

Pernter, Joseph M., 1902-10. *Meteorologische Optik, etc. (IV. Abschnitt ... von Felix M. Exner.)* Wein and Leipzig, Wilhelm Braumüller.

Pinney, C., 2018. *The Waterless Sea: A Curious History of Mirages*. Reaktion Books.

Pliny, Bostock, J., Riley, H.T., 1855. *The Natural History of Pliny*. Bohn, [S.l.].

Scott Brown, Denise & Weaver, Thomas, 2018. *From Soane to the Strip. Soane Medal Lecture 2018*. Sir John Soane's Museum, London.

Thesiger, W., 1959. *Arabian sands*. Longmans, London.

Venturi, Robert & Scott Brown, Denise, 1968. *A Significance for A&P Parking Lots or Learning from Las Vegas*. *Architectural Forum*. March.

X. Final Scene *The figure emerging from / returning to the desert*. Paris, 1957

Bhabha, H.K., 2004. *The location of culture*. Routledge, London ; New York.

Camus, A., 1995. *Summer*. Penguin Books, London.

Camus, A., Thody, P., 1970. *Selected essays and notebooks*. Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Fechner, Elisabeth, 2000. *La Gloire de l'Algérie: Écrivains et photographes de Flaubert à Camus*. Paris, Calmann Lévy.

Findlen, P. (Ed.), 2004. *Athanasius Kircher: the last man who knew everything*. Routledge, New York.

Flaubert, G., Steegmuller, F., 1972. *Flaubert in Egypt: a sensibility on tour; a narrative drawn from Gustave Flaubert's travel notes & letters, translated from the French and edited by Francis Steegmuller*. Bodley Head, London.

Llosa, M.V., 1976. *Albert Camus y la Moral de los Límites*. INTI 7–21.

O'Brien, J., 1957. *Nobel Prize-Winner Camus: A Man Committed Yet Aloof*. *New York Times*, Dec 8, p. 1.

Spiquel, A., 2010. *Camus: amities et question(s) algériennes (1954-1960)*. *The French Review* 83, 1190–1201.

List of Figures

Prelude. Genoa, Italy. 1881.

Fig. 1- Street-Porter, Tim. Reyner Banham, riding his Bickerton over Silurian Lake, California. 1981; from *Pedro Ignacio Alonso & Thomas Weaver in conversation with Tim Street-Porter* in *AA Files* vol. 62. 2011. pp. 28-33.

Fig. 2- Banham, Reyner. *Roads to El Dorado-A journey with Reyner Banham*. 1979. ©BFI Archives

Fig. 3- Poidebard, Antoine. *Due verticale de castellum de Tell Barak*. 1927. In Poidebard, Antoine. *Une Aventure Archéologique...*

Fig. 4- Poidebard, Antoine. *Tempête de sable dans la steppe syrienne*. c.1935, in Poidebard, Antoine. *Une Aventure Archéologique...* p. 280.

Fig. 5- Teynard, Félix. *Sébouah in Egypt et Nubia*, vol. 2. Archives BnF. Res Pho U-203(A)-FOL) ©BnF

Fig. 6a- *Le Mirage en Afrique* & fig. 6b. *Mirage Supérieur Observé à Paris en 1869*; in Flammarion, Camille. *L'atmosphère, météorologie populaire*. 1888. Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie. p. 267 and p. 277.

Fig. 7- Banham, Reyner. Sequence from *Roads to El Dorado-A journey with Reyner Banham*. 1979. ©BFI Archives

Fig. 8- Mountain, Joseph Dunlap. Series of photos from *California-Arabian Standard Oil Co. Saudi Arabia expedition*, 1934-1935. ©Smithsonian Collection

Fig. 9- Lane, Edward William. Notebooks from *Camera lucida cards loose inside a hard binding. Women and jewellery*. c.1825-28. ©The Griffith Institute, University of Oxford

I. Opening Scene. Paris. 1848

Fig. 1- *Axonometric view of the axis Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly*. Image by the author.

Fig. 2- Arnout, J. *Vive la Réforme! A bas Guizot!* ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 3a- Jomard, M. (Edme-François). *Détails de Trois Faces de l'Obélisque Oriental du Palais. Thebes/Louqsor*. In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. III Plate 11.1809-1828. © New York Public Library

Fig. 3b- Jomard, M. (Edme-François). *Détails de Trois Faces de l'Obélisque Occidental du Palais. Thebes/Louqsor*. In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. III Plate 12.1809-1828. © New York Public Library

Fig. 4- 'Halage, Virement et érection de l'obélisque'. Engraving in the pedestal of the obelisk at the Place de la Concorde, Paris.

Fig. 5- Jacques Ignace Hittorff. *Embellissements de la place de la Concorde et des Champs-Élysées. Rapport de la Commission...* 1834 ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 6a- Lebas, Apollinaire. *L'Obélisque de Luxor, histoire de sa translation à Paris, description des travaux auxquels il a donné lieu*. 1839. Plates I-III ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 6b- Lebas, Apollinaire. *L'Obélisque de Luxor, histoire de sa translation à Paris, description des travaux auxquels il a donné lieu*. 1839. Plates VII-X ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 6c- Lebas, Apollinaire. *L'Obélisque de Luxor, histoire de sa translation à Paris, description des travaux auxquels il a donné lieu*. 1839. Plates XI-XIV ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 7- *Axonometric view of the axis Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly with the layering of projects and counter-projects*. Image by the author

Fig. 8- *Axonometric view of the axis*

Madeleine-Concorde-National Assembly showing the position of Du Camp's apartment at the verge of the axis. Image by the author

Fig. 9- Giraud, E. *Maxime du Camp, Father of Thinness* as called in *Flaubert in Egypt, A Sensibility on Tour*. © BnF, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FT 4-NA-87 (2

Fig. 10- Panckoucke, C.L.F. *Fac-simile des monuments coloriés de L'Égypte* 'D'après le Tableau de CLF Panckoucke, chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, editeur de la description de l'Égypte, 2e édition, 1825. In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. I. Frontispiece.1825. © New York Public Library

Fig. 11- Balzac & Chabrol. *Vue et Détails des Sphinx de L'Avenue des Propylées du Palais. Thèbes, Karnak*. In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. 3 Plate 46. © New York Public Library

Fig. 12- Cécile Françoise-Charles. *Frontispiece*. In *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. 1. 1809-1828. © New York Public Library

Fig. 13- Vallet, Charles. *Destruction du Palais-Royal. Voitures de la famille royale brûlées sur la place du Palais-Royal* from *Révolution de 1848*, no 11. gallica.bnf.fr. 0480. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 14- Engelman, Edmund. *Sigmund Freud sitting at his desk*. May 1938. From *Sigmund Freud. Vienna IX. Berggasse 19*. 1998. Universe Publishing. Vienna. p.66-67.

Fig. 15- Engelman, Edmund. *View of the writing desk in the study*. May 1938. From *Sigmund Freud. Vienna IX. Berggasse 19*. 1998. Universe Publishing. Vienna. p.57.

Fig. 16- Hippolyte Bayard. *Barricades, Rue Royale in Paris*. 1848.

II. **Stop 1.** *The Black Box and the Book of Sekhmet*. Paris. 1848.

Fig. 1- Project for a frontispiece designed by Prisse d'Avennes, in Du Camp, Maxime, *We 174 n.1*. in [2 albums et 168 phot. du voyage en Égypte, en Nubie et en Syrie de Maxime Du Camp en 1849-1850, provenant de la bibliothèque d'Henri Duveyrier, don 1893]. 1849-1850. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 2- Redon, Odilon, *Le sphinx: Mon regard que rien ne peut dévier, demeure tendu à travers les choses sur un horizon inaccessible. La chimère: Moi, je suis légère et joyeuse* [The sphinx: My gaze, which nothing can deflect, remains fixed across all things on an unreachable horizon. The chimera: I am full of lightness and joy] plate 5 from *To Gustave Flaubert*. 1889. ©Art Institute Chicago

Fig. 3, Bonomi the Younger, Joseph. Four plates illustrating *Panorama von der zweiten Pyramide in Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (1849-58).

Fig. 4a- Original drawing of Frey, Johann Jacob, *Aufbissen der preussischen Fabne auf der Pyramide des Cheops unter Führung des Prof. Lepsius am 15-Oktober 1842*. ©Das Lepsius-Archiv am Ägyptischen Wörterbuch

Fig. 4b- Frey, Johann Jacob, *Die Teilnehmer der Preussischen Expedition auf der Spitze der Cheopspyramide. Kolorierter Stich nach einer Zeichnung von E. Weidenbach*. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung / Sandra Steiß

Fig. 5a- Original drawing of Frey, Johann Jacob, *Aufbissen der preussischen Fabne auf der Pyramide des Cheops unter Führung des Prof. Lepsius am 15- Oktober 1842*. ©Das Lepsius-Archi

Fig. 5b- Frey, Johann Jacob, *Die Teilnehmer*

der Preussischen Expedition auf der Spitze der Cheopspyramide. Kolorierter Stich nach einer Zeichnung von E. Weidenbach. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung / Sandra Steiß

Fig. 5c- Du Camp, Maxime, 33. *Le Sphinx, vu de profil, 9 décembre 1849, c.n.x., albumen print from waxed paper negative.* From the Collection of the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris. © Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France.

Fig. 5d- *Le Sphinx près des Pyramides.* In Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haut Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte.* 1802. ©Sir John Soane Museum

Fig. 6- Du Camp, Maxime, *Le Sphinx in Egypte, Nubie...* © BnF Gallica.

Fig. 7- Du Camp, Maxime, Original images for plates 35-37 of *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie(...)* in [2 albums et 168 phot. du voyage en Egypte, en Nubie et en Syrie de Maxime Du Camp en 1849-1850, provenant de la bibliothèque d'Henri Duveyrier, don 1893]. 1849-1850. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 8- Gaulmier, Jean. *Note sur l'itinéraire de Volney en Égypte et en Syrie* in BEO, no13, 1949-1851.

Fig. 9- Volney, Constantin François, *Les Ruines, ou Méditation sur les révolutions des empires.* 3rd edition Paris- A.J. Dugour et Durand, 1798.

Fig. 10- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plate 27. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 11a- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plates 29, 37, 56, 105, 109. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 11b- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte,*

*Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plates 28, 32, 33, 34, 43, 45, 48, 87, 97, 108. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 12- Prisse d'Avennes, Émile. *Karnak. Plan Général des Ruines* in Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plate XXVI*. Plate 27. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 13- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plate 47. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 14- Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haut Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte.* (right) 1st Edition, 1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Aîné. (left) Edition, 1803. London. W. Bulmer & co. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 15- 'Reunion de divers fragmens d'architecture Egyptienne'(plate 61) in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haut Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte.*1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Aîné. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 16- Series of plates illustrating the river Nile in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haut Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte.*1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Aîné. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 17- 'View of Cairo from el-uzbékýéh during flooding season of the Nile' in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haut Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte.*1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Aîné. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 18a- *Costumes Egyptiens*(plate 101) in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Bas et le Haut Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte.*1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Aîné. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 18b- plate 103 in Vivant Denon,

Dominique. *Voyage dans le Base et le Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*.1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Ainé. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 19a- *Carte de L'Égypte Inferieure*(plate 7) and *Carte de la Haute Egypte*(plate 140) in Vivant Denon, Dominique. *Voyage dans le Base et le Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*.1802, Paris, P. Didot L'Ainé. ©Sir John Soane Museum.

Fig. 19b- *Tableau d'Assemblage pour la Carte Topographique de L'Égypte* in *Description de L'Égypte*. Vol. *Atlas Géographique*. Plate 1. © British Library.

Fig. 19c- *Itinerary of Maxime du Camp and Gustave Flaubert indicating the stops in this chapter, over Tableau d'Assemblage pour la Carte Topographique de L'Égypte*. Image by the author.

Fig. 20- *Nubie. Seconde Cataracte. Dgebel Abousir*. Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plate 112. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 21- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plate 107. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 22- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plate 17. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 23- *View from the mountain Barkal in Lepsius, Karl R. Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien nach den Zeichnungen...*1849. Berlin. Nicolaische Buchhandlung. Vol. 1. Plate 126. ©British Library.

III. **Excursus Arabia Deserta 1.** *Khenti-Amentiu [Foremost of the Westerners]. Arabian Knights in Disguise*. Mecca. 1888.

Fig. 1- Du Camp, Maxime, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie...*1852. Plate 3. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 2- St. John, James Augustus. *Oriental Album: characters, costumes and modes of life in the valley of the Nile / illustrated from designs by E. Prisse ; with descriptive letterpress by J. A. St. John*.1848. © British Library.

Fig. 3- *ibid* pp.46-47 & pp. 50-51

Fig. 4a- Lloyd, George. *Egypt, Bedouin campsite in the desert*. (unpublished) Lloyd MSS 034. 31 December 1842. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.

Fig. 4b- *Achille Emile Prisse d'Avennes, Portrait*. ©BnF

Fig. 4c- Déveria, Achille. *Emile Prisse d'Avennes*. M4361-01©BnF

Fig. 5- *Map of Arabia illustrative of W.G. Palgrave's Journey in 1862-63* in Palgrave, William Gifford. 1873. © British Library.

Fig. 6a-Letchford, Albert- *Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890), in Arab Dress* published in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 1.

Fig. 6b- *Plan of the Haram of the Prophet's Mosque, at El Medinah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 60.

Fig. 6c- *Ali Bey's Plan of the Prophet's Mosque at Meccah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 485.

Fig. 6d- *Plan of El Medinah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. 456. © British Library.

Fig. 7- *View of El Medinah*, in Burton, sir Richard,1855, p. i.

Fig. 8a- Letchford, Albert. *Sir Richard Burton's Smoking Room* (in Trieste, Italy). Orleans House Gallery. © Richmond upon Thames Borough Art Collection

Fig. 8b- Denon, Dominique-Vivant (1747-1825). *Denon chez lui : Amateurs*. c. 1820 ©BnF

Fig. 9a- 1894. *Palestine. Pierre Loti(centre), journey with Léo Thémèze(and the Duke of Dino for a part)*, in Vercier, Bruno, *Pierre Loti*,

Portraits(...) 2002. Flammarion. Paris. p. 40.

Fig. 9b- Loti, Pierre. *Voyage en Terre Sainte, Janvier-Juin 1894*. 37 photogr. Nég.sur verre. n. et. b.; 6,5 x 9 cm. MPLP4, MPLP7, MPLP8, MPLP13, MPL P16 & MPL P21. © BnF

Fig. 10- *Pierre Loti dressed as Osiris*. 20 February 1887. MPL. © BnF

Fig. 11- *Pierre Loti disguised in the rooms of his home at Rochefort, France*. MPL, MPL/FDH, Bruno Vercier (p.22), Bruno Vercier (p.103), Bruno Vercier (p.27), MPL M229, MPLG7, MPL20, MPL21, MPL18, MPL4

Fig. 12a- Loti, Pierre. *Mosquée*. MPL G 48.

Fig. 12b- Loti, Pierre. *Salon Turc*. MPL G 52.

Fig. 12c- Loti, Pierre. *Vue de la 'chambre arabe': murs à arcades festonnées, blanchis à la chaux, divan coussin rond...* MPL 23.

Fig. 12d- Loti, Pierre. *La chambre à coucher*. MPL 15. © BnF

Fig. 13- Loti, Pierre. *La maison de Pierre Loti à Rochefort. Façade de la maison*. MPL 2. © BnF

Fig. 14b- *Pierre Loti dressed as Osiris*. 20 February 1887. MPL M158, MPL M157, MPL, MPL. © BnF

Fig. 14b- "Pierre Loti camouflaged as Julien Viaud in the garden of his house in Rocheford." circa 1907, in Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p 136.

Fig. 15- Loti, Pierre. *Carte postale publiée par Loti pour son usage personnel* circa 1908-1910, in Vercier, Bruno. 2002. p 156.

Fig. 16- *Stéro-classeur* that belong to Pierre Loti. It enabled the storage of plaques and their vision. In Quella-Villéger, Alain & Vercier, Bruno. 2012. p. 10.

IV. **Stop 2.** *The Rise of Phaethon*. Border Egypt-Libya, 1932

Fig. 1- Penderel, H.W. G. J. RGS 064937 [*Aerial photograph taken while over the Gifl showing outliers*] 1933. ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 2- Photograph of RGS 064937 at the Royal Geographical Society. Image by the author

Fig. 3- Photograph of *Series of Lantern Slides titled 'The Gifl Kebir' by Penderel, H.W.G.J.* at the Royal Geographical Society. RGS 064937 is in the central row to the left. Image by the author

Fig. 4- Hendrick Goltzius. *Phaethon* from the series *The Four Disgracers*. 1588. ©National Gallery in Prague

Fig. 5- Michelangelo Buonarroti. *The Fall of Phaeton, the four horses and chariot tumbling, with Jupiter above, and four nude figures below*. 1895,0915.517, 1531-33. © The Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 6- Clayton-East-Clayton, Robert. *A group of crater-shaped hills in the Libyan desert(...)* and *The unknown wadi north of the Gifl Kebir, about 20 miles long, from the air* in F. J. R. R., *A Reconnaissance of the Gifl Kebir by the Late Sir Robert Clayton East Clayton* in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (Mar., 1933), p. 252(b & c).

Fig. 7- Riggensbach, Albert. *Atlas International des Nages*. 1896. Paris. Gautier-Villars et Fils.

Fig. 8-Abe, Masanao. Various photographs from Helmut Völter's *The Movement of Clouds around Mount Fuji*. Photographed and Filmed by Masanao Abe. 2016. Leipzig. Spector Books

Fig. 9. Ferdinand Quénisset. *Alto-Cumulus et Cirro-Cumulus*. Dugny near Paris, 1916. Gelatin-silver print © Société Astronomique

de France

Fig. 10a- Poidebard, Antoine. *Nuages au dessus de Tyr*. MUSÉE VIRTUEL - ANTOINE Poidebard © Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth.

Fig. 10b- Poidebard, Antoine. *Chaîne Nord-palmyrène*. Glass Plate 13 X 18 cm. MUSÉE VIRTUEL - ANTOINE © Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth.

Fig. 10c- Poidebard, Antoine. *Vue du Quarqia in Salah(Sahara)*. Le 29 avril 1937. in *Une Aventure Archéologique...*

Fig. 11- Kádár, Ladislav, *Looking north over a dune-line from the plateau of the Gilf Kebir in A Study of the Sand Sea in the Libyan Desert in The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934), pp. 476c

Fig. 12- Bagnold, Ralph A. *Wind Tunnel used for the study of transport of sand*. No dated. rgs052614. ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 13- Bagnold, Ralph A. *Method of Illumination of Moving Grains* in Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941

Fig. 14- Bagnold, Ralph A. *Photographs of Grain Paths* in Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941

Fig. 15- Bagnold, Ralph A.

a. *Ridges produced in the wind tunnel* in Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941 & *Examples to illustrate the transport of sand by wind* (rgs052616 & rgs052615) ©Royal Geographical Society

b. *Ripples formed in very fine sand* in Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941 & *Examples to illustrate the transport of sand by wind* (rgs052617 & rgs052618)

c. *Transition from Barchan to Seif dune form due to bi-directional wind* in Bagnold, Ralph A. 1941.

Fig. 16- Bagnold, Ralph A.

a. *The movement of desert sand* (series of lantern slides). rgs235097.

b. Slide S0024034(797-12). ©Royal

Geographical Society

Fig. 17- *Description de L'Égypte*. 1809-1828. © New York Public Library

a. *Tableau d'assemblage pour la carte topographique de l'Égypte...*

b. Gebel Gebel [Jebel Jebel]

c. Detail of desert hatch

Fig. 18- Penderel, H.W.G.J. *Part of the Libyan Desert(...)* in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (Jun., 1934), p. 450

Fig. 19- Bagnold, Ralph. *The Libyan Desert. Showing the routes of Major R.A. Bagnold's Expeditions 1929 & 1930 With those of previous Explorers* in Bagnold, R.A., Dec., 1931, p. 535b.

Fig. 20- *Sun Compass used by Major R.A. Bagnold during his journey in the Libyan Desert 1929-30*. ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 21- *Bagnold's Three inch Paulin altimeter made in Sweden by C.E. Johansson of Eskilstuna at the Royal Geographical Society*. Photographs by the author.

Fig. 22-. *[A collection of maps, formerly the property of H. W. G. J. Penderel, with manuscript additions by Penderel, P. A. Clayton and/or László Almásy relating to exploration in the Egyptian Desert, 1932-1934]* rgs547204 ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 23- *Desert south-west of Dakhla Oasis; Sry of Egypt, Apr. 1924(...)* Note: The additional information and details on/ this map has been inserted by Wing Comdr. H.W.G. J. Penderel M.C., A.F.C'(h.r.b.b.) in *[A collection of maps,...* rgs547204 ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 24- *Gebel Kamil, 1:250.000, signed P.A. Clayton / March 1931'(h.r.b.b.) with MS.(pencil) adds. in [A collection of maps, formerly the property of H. W. G. J. Penderel, with manuscript additions by Penderel, P. A. Clayton and/or László Almásy relating to exploration in the Egyptian Desert, 1932-1934]* rgs547204 - w.93. ©Royal

Geographical Society

Fig. 25- Holiday, Henry. *Fourth of the original illustrations to "The Hunting of the Snark" by Lewis Carroll*. 1876.

Fig. 26- Screenshots from Bagnold, Ralph A. *Libyan desert journeys from the 1930s*. 1 reel of 16mm cine film (49:11 mins.) : mute, b/w. 1930. K233963. ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 27- Screenshots from Bagnold, Ralph A. *Libyan desert journeys from the 1930s*. 1 reel of 16mm cine film (49:11 mins.) : mute, b/w. 1930. K233963. ©Royal Geographical Society

Fig. 28- Screenshots from Mayer, Rudi. *Durch Afrika im Automobil*. 1929.

V. **Stop 3.** *The Algerian Sphinx. or 2°20'14.03" East. Ghardaia, 1933*

Fig. 1- Naphegyi, Gabor. *The Author in the Desert in Ghardaia Or, Ninety Days Among the B'Ni Mozab*. 1871.

Fig. 2- Grille, René. Portrait of Le Corbusier in *Les Chantiers Nord-Africains* in Alex Gerber, 1993, p.106.

Fig. 3- Le Corbusier, 'Coupe en Travers. Retours...ou L'Enseignement du Voyage' in *Plans*. Oct. 1931. Paris. pp. 99, 101, 103 & 104 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 4- Le Corbusier, FLC C12 5230 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 5- Mercier, Marcel. *La Civilisation Urbaine au Mzab*. 1922 1st edition. ©BnF Gallica

Fig. 6- Mercier, Marcel. *La Civilisation Urbaine au Mzab*. 1922 1st edition, pp. planche III, 149 & planche XI ©BnF Gallica.jpg

Fig. 7- Le Corbusier. Postcard, 30 August 1931, CÉJ and Pierre to his mother. R2-1-

128-001 & 002 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 8- Le Corbusier, 'Coupe en Travers. Retours...ou L'Enseignement du Voyage' in *Plans*. Oct. 1931. Paris. p. 106. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 9- Lee Thompson, John. *Ice Cold in Alex*. 1958

Fig. 10a- Le Corbusier with Durafour. Le Corbusier is carrying his sketch book.

Fig. 10b- Durafour's Caudron C.282 / 4 Phalene. from Gerber, Alex. 1993. pp. 180-181.

Fig. 11- Le Corbusier, *Sketch with Durafour's airplane shown on the left*. 19 May 1933. FLC C5 5013 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 12- Le Corbusier, *double spread comparing 'Le Probleme Mal Posé'[the problem badly conceived] and a Farman aircraft from Eyes that do not see/Airplanes in Vers une Architecture*. 1925. pp. 98-99.

Fig. 13- Alberti, *manuscript with drawing*. 1438.

Fig. 14a- Le Corbusier. *Flight with Durafour over the cities of the M'Zab*. Item B2-10-304. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 14b- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey* Fondation Le Corbusier C5-5010, from Gresleri, Giuliano. *Viaggio e scoperta, descrizione e trascrizione in Casabella*, vol. 531-532, Jan.-Feb. 1987.

Fig. 15- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey* Fondation Le Corbusier C5-5011, from Gresleri, Giuliano. *Viaggio e scoperta, descrizione e trascrizione in Casabella*, vol. 531-532, Jan.-Feb. 1987.

Fig. 16- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5001. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 17- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5002. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 18- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5005. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 19- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5003. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 20- Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5000. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 21- Alex Gerber. *Croquis of the pentapole system in the valley of the M'zab* in Gerber, Alex. 1993. p. 163.

Fig. 22- Le Corbusier, *Meridien Paris – El Golea – Gao in Poésie Sur Alger*.

Fig. 23- Le Corbusier. *Diagram of the flight over the valley of the M'zab. Sketch* in Le Corbusier, *Sketches of 1933 journey*. FLC C5-5000. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 24- Le Corbusier. *Poésie sur Alger*, pp. 23, 24, 28 & 30. 1989 fac-similé of original 1950 edition.

Fig. 25- Le Corbusier, *Manière de Penser l'Urbanisme*. 1977. p.127. Le Corbusier, *Manière de Penser l'Urbanisme*. 1946. p. 94-95.

Fig. 26- Postcard, *Araberdorf - Fotomontage mit Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart* (Arab Village - Photomontage with the Weissenhof Housing Development, Stuttgart). Published in *Schwäbisches Heimatbuch*, 1941. Stuttgart, Stadtarchiv.

Fig. 27- Le Corbusier, *Manuscript for Poésie sur Alger*. 1^{er} mai 1942. *Poésie sur Paris* 1^{er} juin 1942. FLC A3-7-365-001 ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 28- Le Corbusier- *Back of front cover and first page of sketchbook*. F3-5-5. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 29- Le Corbusier- *Page of sketchbook*. F3-5-5-042. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 30- Le Corbusier, Cover for *Poésie sur Alger*. 1989, fac-similé of original 1950

edition.

Fig. 31- Le Corbusier- Project for the cover of *Poésie sur Alger*. FCL A3(7)438. ©Fondation Le Corbusier

Fig. 32- Le Corbusier, *Le Poeme de L'Angle Droit*. 2012. Ostfildern, Germany, Hatje Cantz. pp. 82-83.

Fig. 33- Le Corbusier, *Le Poeme de L'Angle Droit*. 2012. Ostfildern, Germany, Hatje Cantz. pp. 108-109 / 116-117.

VI. **Excursus 2** *Eyes that do not see – Desert*. Sheba, 1934

Fig. 1- Arnaud, Joseph. *Plan de la digue de Mareb et des ruines de la ville de Saba, dans le midi de l'Arabie / Fait par Mr. Th. Joseph Arnaud en 1843*. © BnF

Fig. 2- Arnaud, Joseph. *Plan de la digue de Mareb et des ruines de la ville de Saba, dans le midi de l'Arabie / Fait par Mr. Th. Joseph Arnaud en 1843*. Ink drawings from the original. © BnF

Fig. 3- Labrousse, Henri. *Bibliothèque Nationale, Richelieu*. Photo by the author.

Fig. 4- Malraux, André. *Saba Légendaire*. May, 6 1934 in Malraux, André. *La Reina de Saba. Una aventura geográfica*. 2011. Barcelona, Ediciones Península.

Fig. 5- *Advertisement in L'Intransigeant announcing the article with the photographs to come the day after*. May, 7th 1934. © BnF

Fig. 6- Malraux, André. *Images of Sheba* published in *L'Intransigeant*. May, 8th 1934. © BnF

Fig. 7- Malraux, André. *Images of Sheba* published in *L'Intransigeant*. May, 10th 1934. © BnF

Fig. 8- Nucci, Avanzino. *Sainte Lucie tenant un livre sous le bras et ses yeux sur une coupe*. INV 4502, Recto. Fonds des dessins et miniatures. c. 1671. © Musée du Louvre

Fig. 9- Crivelli, Carlo. *Saint Lucy*, belonging to the group *Four Panels from an altarpiece, Ascoli Piceno*. c. 1430/5-about 1494. NG788.12 © The National Gallery

Fig. 10a- Von der Esch, Hansjoachim. *László Almásy with camera; shadow of his airplane on the sand* in Almásy, László. *Unbekannte Sahara*. 1939.

Fig. 10b- *Penderel in the shadow of the "molly"* in Almásy, László. *Levegőben...Homokon*. 1937.

Fig. 11- Goya, Francisco de. *The Blind Man's Buff [La Gallina Ciega]*. 1788.© Museo del Prado

VII. **Stop 4** *Le Domain de l'Afrique*. Libyan desert somewhere between Benghazi and Cairo, at about 2.45am, December, 30th 1935.

Fig. 1a- *Fotografía del personal de la Escuadrilla del Sáhara Español(...)* de pie, el primero por la izquierda, *Saint Exupéry*. [Photograph of the staff of the Spanish Sahara Squadron(...) standing, the first from the left, Saint Exupéry.

Ref. 3-1077-20 ©Archivo Histórico del Ejército del Aire.

Fig. 1b- *Vista aérea del Fuerte de Cabo Juby* [Aerial view of Cabo Juby fort]. Ref. DIG-51-33. ©Archivo Histórico del Ejército del Aire.

Fig. 2- *Frontispiece for Wind, Sand and Stars*. John O'Hara Cosgrave. 1939.

Fig. 3- *Interior of Saint-Exupéry's Airplane-Caudron C.630 Simoun*, F-ANRY.

Fig. 4- *Antoine de Saint Exupéry stands next to the wreck of his Caudron C.630 Simoun*, F-ANRY. ©Bureau d'Archives des Accidents d'Avions.

Fig. 5- *L'avion de Jacques Bernis, écrasé dans le*

désert. [Jacques Bernis' airplane crashes into the desert] in Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *Dessins. Aquarelles, pastels, plumes et crayons*. 2006. Paris. Gallimard. p. 204.

Fig. 6- *Poster for Impressions d'Afrique at the Théâtre Antoine*. 1912. Ref. R85558. ©BnF.

Fig. 7- *Main Scenes in Impressions d'Afrique at the Théâtre Antoine*. 1912. Ref. R85558. ©BnF.

Fig. 8- 22nd-24th of November in *Carnet de notes prises durant un voyage en Egypte, 22 novembre – 21 decembre*. 1906. Ref. NAF 26394 cote LXV. ©BnF.

Fig. 9- *Carnet de notes prises durant un voyage en Egypte, 22 novembre – 21 decembre*. 1906. Ref. NAF 26394 cote LXV. ©BnF.

Fig. 10- *La Maison Roulante de M. Roussel* in *La Revue du Touring Club de France*. August 1926. ©BnF.

Fig. 11- Jules Verne. *La Maison à Vapeur*. 1880. ©BnF.

Fig. 12- *Le studio* in *La Maison Roulante de M. Roussel* in *La Revue du Touring Club de France*. August 1926. ©BnF.

Fig. 13- Leiris, Michel. *L'oeil de l'Ethnologue* in *Documents* 2:7. 1930. No. 7. Year 2. p. 404-5. ©BnF.

Fig. 14- Index of *Minotaure*, 1933. Vol. 2; showing the itinerary of the Dakar-Djibouti Mission.

Fig. 15- Leiris, Michel. *Masques Dogon* in *Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 2. pp. 45-47.

Fig. 16- Leiris, Michel. *Danses Funéraires Dogon* in *Minotaure*. 1933. Vol 1. p. 73-75.

Fig. 17- *Michel Leiris writing his diary*, from Leiris, Michel. *Miroir de l'Afrique*. 1996. Paris. Gallimard. p.197.

Fig. 18- Leiris, Michel. *Funérailles (5) d'un chasseur. Fiche de Leiris reproduisant texte Mamadou Keyta*. October 1931. Ref. fmg_D_a_04_070_18. Bibliothèque Eric-de-Dampier. LESC. MAE. Université Paris

Nanterre. ©Université Paris Nanterre

Fig. 19- Zo, Henri-A. *Illustration 42 for Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique* by Raymond Roussel. 1932.

Fig. 20- Ray, Man. *Voici le Domaine de Rose Sélary...Vue Prise en Aéroplane*. 1921.

Fig. 21- Zo, Henri-A. *Illustration 32 for Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique* by Raymond Roussel. 1932.

Fig. 22- Gaumet, F. *Campylomètre* in
a. *Mémoires de la société des ingénieurs civils*. 1879. Vol. 32. p. 727.

b. *La Nature*. Premier semestre, 1880. p.300. ©BnF

VIII. **Stop 5** *Ex Africa Aliquid Novum*. Algerian Sahara, 1951.

Fig. 1- Metz, Lex. *Op't nieuwe Burgerweeshuys te Amsterdam in Niet om het even : wel evenwaardig : van en over Aldo van Eyck*. 1986. Rotterdam, Stichting Rotterdam-Maaskant.

Fig. 2- Klee, Paul. *With Two Dromedaries and One Donkey*. 1914/19. ©Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art, Bernard and Cola Heiden Collection.

Fig. 3- Griaule, Marcel. Page of *Introduction Méthodologique* showing the plan of the public square in Ogot-du-Haut, in *Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 2. p. 11.

Fig. 4- Van Eyck, Aldo. Original version of *Otterlo Circles*. 1951.

Fig. 5- Van Eyck, Aldo. *Cracks in a recently built, otherwise intact house in Aoulef*, 1951, in Van Eyck, Aldo. *Bouwen in de Zuidelijke Oasen [Building in the Southern Oases]* in *Forum*. 1953. No. 1.

Fig. 6a- *Alison and Peter Smithson, in desert costumes*. 1953. CIAM IX in Smithson, Alison. 1991.

Fig. 6b- Smithson, Alison. Preparation

for the cover of *Saint Jerome: the Desert... the Study*. 1990. From van den Heuvel, Dirk. *Alison and Peter Smithson: from the House of the Future to a house of today*. 2004. Rotterdam, 010 Publishers.

Fig. 7a- Henderson, Nigel. *Four artists included in the exhibition 'This is Tomorrow'*. (bottom), and portrait as it was shown in the catalogue of the exhibition(top). 1956 © The Estate of Nigel Henderson and The Mayor Gallery

Fig. 7b- Henderson, Nigel. Peter Smithson, Eduardo Paolozzi, Alison Smithson, and Nigel Henderson. 1956 © The Estate of Nigel Henderson and The Mayor Gallery

Fig. 8- *Base camp* in Piet Vollaard. *Herman Haan architect*. 1995. Rotterdam, Uitgeverij 010. pp. 8, 9.

Fig. 9- Haan, Herman. Images in *Life in the desert*. 1959, in Newman, Oscar. 1961.

Fig. 10- Herman Haan recording the sessions at CLAM '59. BAKE_f23 Nos: 35 / 90 / 92 / 132 / 24 / 172 / 146 & 124 © NAI Collection

Fig. 11- Helene Kröller-Müller laid out in the [Kröller-Müller] Rijksmuseum. 1939. ©Kröller-Müller Museum

Fig. 12a- Haan, Herman. 'Death of CLAM' as Staged by Team 10. 1959. ©Het Nieuwe Instituut

Fig. 13- 'Death of CLAM' as Staged by Team 10. 1959. TTEN_f8 Nos: 1a / 2 / 5 / 6 & 9. Team 10 Archives ©Het Nieuwe Instituut

Fig. 14- Haan, Herman[possible author]. "The Death of CLAM" at the last CIAM meeting, Otterlo, Holland. Peter Smithson, Alison Smithson, John Voelcker, Jaap Bakema, Sandy van Ginkel; Aldo van Eyck and Blanche Lemco. 1959

Fig. 15- Van Eyck, Aldo. *Architecture of the Dogon* in *Architectural Forum*. Sept. 1961. Vol. 115. No. 5. pp. 116-121.

Fig. 16- Haan, Herman. *The House is the Belly of the Mother* in *Architects' Year Book*. 1965.

Fig. 17a- Haan, Herman. 'Sirige' as shown in *The House is the Belly of the Mother* in *Architects' Year Book*. 1965.

Fig. 17b- 'Les "Mères des Masques" Dogon...' in Leiris, Michel. *Objets Rituels Dogon* in *Minotaure*. 1933. Vol. 2.

Fig. 18- Van Eyck, Aldo. *Section of the Dogon territory* in Sept. 1961. Vol. 115. No. 5. p. 116.

Fig. 19- Haan, Herman. *Rotswand, Zuidelijke Mali [Rock Wall, Souther Mali]*. Undated. 410x565x55 mm. Ref. MAQV599. ©Het Nieuwe Instituut

Fig. 20a- Kees van Langeraad interviewing Herman Haan. 1964. ©ANP Historisch Archief.

Fig. 20b- The expedition team setting off from Rotterdam on January, 7 1964. From left: Kees van Langeraad, Didier Kockenberg (?), Jacques Groeneveld, René Wassing, Herman Haan, Hansje Fischer-Haan, (unidentified), Violette Cornelius, Jan Rietveld. Note van Langeraad's microphone, and the parts of the aluminum capsule on the roof carrier of the Land Rover; from Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 174.

Fig. 21- Transport, assemblage and lifting of Haan's capsule.

a. in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 137.

b. from *Tellem*, 1975 colour documentary.

c. in Jaschke, Karin. 2012. p. 148.

Fig. 22- Haan, Herman. *Rope system for lifting capsule* in Haan, Herman. *Tellem: Verkenning van een oude Afrikaanse cultuur*. 1964. Rotterdam, Museum voor Land- en Volkenunde; Utrecht, Antropo-biologisch Instituut der Rijksuniversiteit. Unnumbered page.

Fig. 23- Haan, Herman. *Tellem programme for NCRV (Nederlandse Christelijke Radio*

Vereniging). 1964.

Fig. 24- Rouch, Jean. *Cimetières dans la Falaise*. 1950.

Fig. 25a- Rouch, Jean. *Cimetières dans la Falaise*. 1950.

Fig. 25b- Cornelius, Violette. *Aluminum capsule* in Haan, Herman. *Tellem: Verkenning van een oude afrikaanse cultuur*. Zeist: W. de Haan, 1965,

Fig. 25c- Haan inside the capsule and shots from inside in *Tellem*, 1975 colour documentary.

Fig. 26- Haan, Herman. *Tellem programme for NCRV (Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging)*. 1964.

Fig. 27- Herman Haan Houses published in

a. *Architectural Design*. 1959 p. 457

b. *The Architect and Building News*. 1960 Sept 28. pp. 396-397.

c. *International Asbestos-Cement Review*. 1958 no 12. p. 27.

Fig. 28- Cornelius, Violette. *Herman Haan in his house* in Vollaard, Piet. 1995. p. 39.

Fig. 29a- Weaver, Thomas. *No title [Denise Scott-Brown in her living-room]* 2018. Courtesy of Thomas Weaver.

Fig. 29b- Madelon Vriesendorp in her studio-house, London

Fig. 30a- Koolhaas, Rem. *Lagos/Koolhaas*. 2002.

Fig. 30b- Koolhaas, Rem. *Lagos: Wide & Close. An interactive Journey into an Exploding City*. 2004.

Fig. 31- Aldo van Eyck's collection from Strauven, Francis. 1998. pp.454 & 455.

Fig. 32- Jarnoux, Maurice. *writer Andre Malraux poses in his house of Boulogne near Paris working at his book Le Musee Imaginaire or Imaginary Museum 2nd volume Du bas relief aux Grottes Sacrees*. 1953. ©Getty Images

Fig. 33a- Images of Violette Cornelius illustrating van Eyck's speech at Otterlo, in Newman, Oscar. 1961. pp. 32-33.

Violette, Cornelius. *Het Burgerweeshuis van Aldo van Eyck*. 1961

b- VIC / 218 /1-15

c- VIC / 1987 /1-10

d- VIC / 219 /1-12

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 34a- Violette, Cornelius. *Architectuur Herman Haan*. 1953-60.

VIC / 1973 /1 & VIC / 1971 /1

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 34b- Violette, Cornelius. *Tellem-expeditie*. 1964.

VIC / 598 /15 ; VIC / 618 /17 & VIC / 641 /4

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 34c- Violette, Cornelius. *Ethiopië*. 1969. VIC / 2870 /13c

d- Violette, Cornelius. *Peru*. 1969. VIC / 2708 /3

e- Violette, Cornelius. *Kokende vrouw, Irak*. 1964-66.

VIC / 10152 /19

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 35a- Haan, Herman P.C. *Honorair-conservator, architect Herman Haan met zijn echtgenotie Hansje en de directeur van het Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde de heer dr. C. Nooteboom (links met hoed), vóór vertrek naar Noord-Afrika*. 1955. WMR / 901054

b. Haan, Herman P.C. *Het busje van Herman en Hansje Haan tijdens de Sahara-expeditie, Algerije*. 1953. WMR / 901342

© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

IX. **Excursus 3** *Fata Morgana*. Empty Quarter, 1950

Fig. 1-Thesiger, Wilfred. Map of *the Empty Quarter* indicating his routes in *Arabian Sands*. 1959. London, Longmans.

Fig. 2-Thesiger, Wilfred. Photographs of *the Empty Quarter* in *Arabian Sands*. 1959. London, Longmans. pp. 128-129.

Fig. 3-Aldo and Hannie van Eyck in the Tademait, Algerian Sahara, 1951 in van Eyck, Aldo. 2008. p. 85.

Fig. 4- Kircher, Athanasius. *Ars magna lucis et umbrae : in decem libros digesta ; quibus admirandae lucis et umbrae in mundo...*1671. Amsterdam, Joannen Jannsonium. Book X, Part II. p. 704-705.

Fig. 5- Kircher, Athanasius.

a. Frontispiece.

b. Magic Lantern in *Ars magna lucis et umbrae : in decem libros digesta ; quibus admirandae lucis et umbrae in mundo...*1646. Rome, Hermanni Scheus.

c. Magic Lantern as shown in *Ars magna lucis et umbrae : in decem libros digesta ; quibus admirandae lucis et umbrae in mundo...*1671. Amsterdam, Joannen Jannsonium

Fig. 6- Hartwig, Georg, *Mirage*. 1874 in Hartwig, Georg. 1874.

Fig. 7- Herzog, Werner. *Fata Morgana*. 1971.

Fig. 8- Wheatstone, Charles, *The Wheatstone mirror*. c.1840.

Fig. 9- Dalí, Salvador. *Batalla en las nubes (Obra estereoscópica)* [Battle in the Clouds (Stereoscopic Work)]. 1979. 100 x 100 cm(each part) ©Museo Reina Sofia.

X. **Final Scene** *The figure emerging from / returning to the desert*. Paris, 1957

Fig. 1- Lean, David. *Lawrence of Arabia*. Final Scene. 1962

Fig. 2- Lean, David. *Lawrence of Arabia*. Black Rider Scene. 1962

Fig. 3- Rouch, Jean. *Cimetière dans la Falaise*. Opening Scene. 1950

Fig. 4- Rouch, Jean. *Cimetière dans la Falaise*. Final Scene. 1950

Fig. 5- Rouch, Jean. *La chasse au lion à l'arc*. Opening Scene. 1965

Fig. 6a- Ford, John. *The Searchers*. Opening Scene. 1956

Fig. 6b- Ford, John. *The Searchers*. Final Scene. 1956

Fig. 7a- Wenders, Wim. *Paris, Texas*. Opening Scene. 1984

Fig. 7b- Wenders, Wim. *Paris, Texas*. Final Scene. 1984

Fig. 8- Kircher, Athanasius. *Oedipus Aegyptiacus: frontispiece. Vol. 1. 1652- 1654* © Cornell University Library

Fig. 9- *Action-packed Intellectual* in *LIFE* magazine. 14th Oct., 1957

1b. Dean, Loomis. *French writer Albert Camus smoking cigarette on balcony outside his publishing firm office*. 1957. Paris, France. Original ID: TimeLife_image_1020837. © Time Inc.

Fig. 10- Dean, Loomis. One of the photographs of the series *Albert Camus*. 1957. Paris, France. Original ID: TimeLife_image_113624291. © Time Inc.

Fig. 11- Dean, Loomis. Images of the series *Albert Camus*. 1957. Paris, France. Original ID: TimeLife_image_113624304, 113624271, 113624302, 113624274, 113624301. © Time Inc.

Fig. 12- *No title*. Photograph by the author. 2019

Fig. 13- Roche, Manuelle. *Le M'Zab. Architecture Ibadite en Algérie*. 1970. Paris, Arthaud. Illustrations 52-54

Fig. 14- *The mosque of Sidi Ibrahim, El-Ateuf, Algeria*. Photograph by the author. 2019

Fig. 15- *River-bed of the Oned, Palm Grove of Ghardaïa*. 2019. Photograph by the author

Fig. 16- *Oasis de Ghardaïa*. 1910. Paris. Institute Géographique National. From the collection of the Centre Culturel et de Documentation Saharienne, Ghardaïa, Algeria.

Fig. 17- *Oasis de Bou Noura - Melika / Oasis de Beni Isguene / Oasis d'El Ateuf*. 1910. Paris. Institute Géographique National. From the collection of the Centre Culturel et de Documentation Saharienne, Ghardaïa, Algeria

Fig. 18- *No title*. Photographs by the author. 2019

Fig. 19- *No title*. Photographs by the author. 2019

Fig. 20- *Outskirts of Hassi Febal, Algeria*. Photographs by the author. 2019

Fig. 21- *Outskirts of Hassi Febal, Algeria*. Photographs by the author. 2019

Fig. 22-

a. Redon, Odilon, *Le sphinx: Mon regard(...)* plate 5 from *To Gustave Flaubert*. 1889. © Art Institute Chicago

b. Du Camp, Maxime, *Le Sphinx in Egypte, Nubie...* © BnF Gallica.

c-d. Engelman, Edmund. *Sigmund Freud sitting at his desk*. May 1938. From *Sigmund Freud. Vienna IX. Berggasse 19*. 1998. Universe Publishing. Vienna. p.66-67.

e. Cornelius, Violette. *Herman Haan in his house* in Vollaard, Piet. 1995. p. 39.

Fig. 23

b. Le Corbusier, Cover for *Poésie sur Alger*. 1989, fac-similé of original 1950 edition.

a & c. Le Corbusier, *Le Poème de L'Angle Droit*. 2012. Ostfildern, Germany, Hatje Cantz. pp. 108-109 / 116-117.

